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NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* Dr. A. H. Qureshi

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ASPECTS OF HERTHA:
SWINBURNE'S SYMBOL OF THE WOMAN

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled ASPECTS OF HERTHA: SWINBURNE'S SYMBOL OF THE WOMAN, submitted by LORNA McCALLUM VAUGHAN in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

A H Qureshi
Supervisor

Muriel A. Whitaker

J. W. Bilsland

Milan V. Dimić

Kerry McSweeney
External Examiner

Date October 5, 1978

ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the woman symbol in the works of Swinburne, particularly his poetry. Chapter I establishes the prevalence of the symbol in Swinburne's works, and opposes the critics such as Mario Praz who associate Swinburne's sensibility only with the image of the *femme fatale*. These critics do not sufficiently take into consideration the dramatic nature of the early works in which she appears, her symbolic import in other works of the century, and her place in the context of Swinburne's works as a whole.

Chapter I therefore concludes with an examination of the implications of the image of the woman in Romantic literature and traces the gradual darkening of the image later in the century. And Chapter II examines Swinburne's all-inclusive symbol of the woman, who represents the destructive and the creative energies of life and is the creator of man, her highest power. Hertha, Swinburne's Great Mother, is particularly associated in the volume in which she speaks, *Songs before Sunrise*, with the freedom of man. In this volume of poetry, her daughters are the bound or free spirits of nations.

Chapter III returns to the earlier works, particularly *Poems and Ballads*, and establishes that they are more in keeping with the symbolic import of Hertha than has been previously suggested. The central symbols of Swinburne's first volume of poetry, Venus and Proserpine, are also daughters of Hertha, even though the speakers in the dramatic monologues in which they appear see them only as fatal women. In this volume of poetry, Swinburne himself examines the causes behind the darkening image of the woman and, by doing so, reveals his own, more

positive vision of life. This vision is represented in Poems and Ballads by "Hesperia," in which the speaker achieves the individual state of mind which makes collective freedom a possibility. As "Hesperia" clearly reveals, Swinburne's sense of life is not as negative in the early works as is often assumed, just as Songs before Sunrise is not as optimistic as some have thought.

The remaining chapters examine Swinburne's later, and still too often neglected, works: his "nature poems"; his major work on a mythological subject, "Tristram of Lyonesse"; his more personal works, particularly the novels and "Thalassius"; and his "Apollo poems." These works reaffirm the vision of life presented in a philosophical context in "Hertha" and in a more psychological one in "Hesperia."

As Chapter IV establishes, the "nature poems," like "Hesperia," present the individual's acceptance of the truths of Hertha. The Great Goddess is often presented in these poems as the sea, and the individual's joyful acceptance of her often-harsh truths as his swim in the stormy waters. Swinburne's Tristram is one who achieves this acceptance, again symbolized by his dive into the waters. "Tristram of Lyonesse," examined in Chapter V, also directly affirms the philosophy of "Hertha" in its invocations to Love and Fate, essentially the same forces as Hertha.

Chapter VI considers the more personal works and indicates that although the women in these works cannot be identified positively with the women of Swinburne's life, the works do conform to the pattern established in "Hesperia." In "Thalassius" the process by which the individual accepts the truths of life is presented and given autobiographical significance. This poem ends with the poet's dedication to Apollo, the son of Hertha and the spirit of man. And, as is established in Chapter VII, many of Swinburne's later poems are dedicated to the god or to those Apollonian poets who have understood his significance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXT OF SWINBURNE'S WOMAN SYMBOL 1

Chapter II: HERTHA 55

Chapter III: VENUS AND PROSERPINE 102

Chapter IV: HESPERIA 179

Chapter V: TRISTRAM AND ISEULT 242

Chapter VI: SWINBURNE AND HIS "DREAD LADY" 299

Chapter VII: APOLLO AND SAPPHO 338

Chapter VIII: CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF SWINBURNE'S WOMAN SYMBOL 383

FOOTNOTES 392

BIBLIOGRAPHY 508

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

"Woman, woman, woman, woman," complains Alfred Austin in "The Poetry of the Period" (1869). The poets and the novelists of the day, he says, are obsessed with "ringing such changes as can be rung on what -- we mean no disrespect or depreciation of the sex, that is both fair, devout, dear, and indispensable -- has well been called 'everlasting woman.'" The age is emasculated, he maintains, and Tennyson's poetry, with its tiresome proliferation of women figures, represents this unfortunate trend. Instead of truly revolting and returning to the masculine virility of a Byron, Swinburne has merely changed the note from "the sentimental" to "the sensuous." Both modern poets have "substantially feminine muses; only one is the feminine muse of the Hearth, whilst the other is the feminine muse of the Hetairae."[1]

Austin is referring to Swinburne's early published plays, and particularly to his first volume of poetry, Poems and Ballads (1866). The volume is, indeed, dedicated to the "daughters of dreams and of stories,"[2] especially those *femmes fatales* of literature and history (and, as has been recently suggested, the "dread lady"[3] of his own life). In fact, such incarnations of the "darker Venus"[4] and the deadly Proserpine are so sensually and explicitly celebrated that Poems and Ballads was an immediate and unprecedented *succès de scandale*. Here, instead of Patmore's angel in the house or Tennyson's domestic heroines, we have Faustine and Fragoletta, Aholibah, Azubah and Atarah. And, of course, the infamous Dolores, sung by the undergraduates of Cambridge and Oxford:

Cold eyelids that hide like a jewel
   Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour;
The heavy white limbs, and the cruel
   Red mouth like a venomous flower;

And:

O lips full of lust and of laughter,
  Curled snakes that are fed from my breast,
Bite hard, lest remembrance come after
  And press with new lips where you pressed.[5]

The figure of the woman continues to be a pervasive and central image in Swinburne's works. Although his next volume of poetry, Songs before Sunrise (1871), is devoted instead to the less inflammatory subject of the freedom and political liberty of man, freedom itself is consistently depicted as a "golden goddess"[6] and the spirits of nations and cities as her entombed or resurrected daughters. Italy, for instance, speaks in "The Litany of Nations" to her mother:

I am she that was the light of thee enkindled
  When Greece grew dim;
She whose life grew up with man's free life, and dwindled
  With wane of him.
She that once by sword and once by word imperial
  Struck bright thy gloom;
And a third time, casting off these years funereal,
  Shall burst thy tomb.
By that bond 'twixt thee and me whereat affrighted
  Thy tyrants fear us;
By that hope and this remembrance reunited;
(Chor.) O mother hear us.[7]

The freedom of Italy is, of course, the immediate inspiration for the volume. Swinburne and his mentor Mazzini both hoped that Italy would rise again and the republican forces of freedom would triumph.

Swinburne's political ideology is grounded in a kind of "pantheistic" philosophy, and the goddess of freedom is herself but one aspect of Hertha, Swinburne's Great Mother, the chthonic creator and sustainer of all. She speaks:

I am that which began;
  Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
  I am equal and whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul.[8]

"Hertha" is the poem in which Swinburne presents his image of the woman in its most cosmic proportions and therefore the poem in which he reveals his own philosophy to the greatest extent. "Hertha" is central to Songs before Sunrise, and Songs before Sunrise is at the heart of Swinburne. Although the volume is often considered to be a complete change of note and inspiration from the previous one, it will be shown that Venus and Proserpine and their successive embodiments, the central figures of Poems and Ballads, are equally daughters of Hertha. Although the central poems of the volume are dramatic monologues which explore through the symbols of Venus and Proserpine the negative attitudes to existence caused by the inability to accept the truths of Hertha, Swinburne's own more positive attitude to life may be seen behind these poems and, indeed, is directly presented in "Hesperia."

Swinburne's subsequent volumes of poetry are perhaps not so dominated by the figure of the woman; however, we do have not only celebrations of love and such famous lovers as Tristram and Iseult but also several more personal recollections of Swinburne's own "lost love." And, most significantly, we have those heightened moments of union between man and the Great Goddess, usually seen as the sea. In the following passage from "Tristram of Lyonesse," for example, Tristram, the "flower of all men," joyfully accepts the mingled pain and pleasure of embracing the "mother" as he dives into the sea:

with a cry of love that rang
As from a trumpet golden-mouthed, he sprang.
As towards a mother's where his head might rest

Her child rejoicing, toward the strong sea's breast
That none may gird nor measure . . . .
. . . .
. . . . ,
And toward the foam he bent and forward smote,
Laughing, and launched his body like a boat
Full to the sea-breach, and against the tide
Struck strongly forth with amorous arms made wide
To take the bright breast of the wave to his
And on his lips the sharp sweet minute's kiss
Given of the wave's lip for a breath's space curled
And pure as the daydawn of the world.[9]

The idea presented here of accepting existence and joyfully striving in nature is central to Swinburne and is presented in such important later poems as "A Channel Passage," "The Lake of Gaube," and "A Nympholept."

The same fascination with the "eternal woman" is present in Swinburne's plays. In Erechtheus, written soon after Songs before Sunrise and published in 1876, we have Chthonia, the daughter of Erechtheus who freely and willingly sacrifices herself for the liberty of Athens. Most of the central women figures in the plays are, however, variations of the archetype of the femme fatale. Evidence of Swinburne's early interest in the archetype is present in the unpublished play The Unhappy Revenge, written in 1849 when Swinburne was still at Eton and just discovering the dramas of Massinger, Webster, and Tourneur. The Revenger's Tragedy particularly inspired him, but in his own play the revenge is that of the fierce Eudoxia, who betrays Rome to the Huns to avenge the Emperor Maximus's violation of her. Equally interesting is Eroclea, the Christian martyr whose love of God has that note of erotic pleasure and pain which Lafourcade considers to be characteristic of Swinburne: "le désir de souffrir pour Dieu s'unit d'une façon troublante et déjà bien swinburnienne avec une sorte de recherche de la douleur perçue comme un plaisir."[10] He quotes several fragments spoken by Eroclea to support his point:

Fetch more irons
Hotter than these that tear me; pour fresh oils
On the flames that consume my flesh; away!
Can you not force one shriek? what are your gods
That cannot torture?

And:

My soul shall welcome it [the rack]
As the sweet strain that ushers me to bliss . . .
To Heaven I bear
My soul a white transported sacrifice
Wash'd pure in my own blood . . . .[11]

In the also unpublished and unfinished Laugh and Lie Down, written when Swinburne was not thirteen but about twenty-three, the image of the woman is consolidated into that which controls the early plays.[12] Instead of sacrificing herself to God, as does Eroclea, the woman becomes the divine and imperious figure to whom the submissive male sacrifices himself. In the play, Frank, the page-boy of the cruel Imperia, begs to be "sweetly lashd" by her and "would so fain be hurt /But really hurt, hurt deadly, to do good /To your most sudden fancy."[13] He achieves this desire, Lafourcade tells us, and eventually dies at her hands.

It is usually suggested that in this play Swinburne's archetype of the femme fatale is complete, and that it completely dominates not only his subsequent plays but also his own life.[14] Rosamond (Rosamond, begun in 1858 and published after much revision in 1860), Denise (The Queen-Mother, begun in 1859 and published in 1860), Mary Stuart (Chastelard, begun in 1859 and published in 1865), and Atalanta (Atalanta in Calydon, begun in 1863 and published in 1865) are all considered to be embodiments of Swinburne's fatal woman. Indeed, Rosamond is herself aware of her archetypal powers:

Yea, I am found the woman in all tales,
The face caught always in the story's face;
I, Helen, holding Paris by the lips,
Smote Hector through the head; I Cressida

So kissed men's mouths that they went sick or mad,
Stung right at brain with me; I Guenevere
Made my queen's eyes so precious and my hair
Delicate with gold in its soft ways
And my mouth honied so for Launcelot,
Out of good things he chose his golden soul
To be the pearlwork of my treasuring hands,
And so our love foiled God; I that was these
And am no sweeter now than Rosamond . . . .[15]

And Denise seems to evince the amorous cruelty of this archetypal woman; as she says to Charles,

Yea, I could search thy veins about with steel
Till in no corner of thy crannied blood
Were left to run red witness of a man,
No breath to test thee kinglier than dead flesh
Sooner than lose this face to touch, this hair
To twist new curls in; yea, prove me verily,
Sift passion pure to the blind edge of pain,
And see if I will.[16]

Similarly, Mary Stuart is compared by Chastelard to the "deadlier Venus," the Venus who

reddens at the mouth with blood of men,
Sucking between small teeth the sap o' the veins,
Dabbling with death her little tender lips --
A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearlèd mouth.
. . . .
. . . .
Fair fearful Venus made of deadly foam,
I shall escape you somehow with my death --
Your splendid supple body and mouth on fire
And Paphian breath that bites the lips with heat.[17]

Chastelard celebrates the cruelty of his sovereign lady and carries courtly love to its extremest form of consummation -- death. Meleager, too, dies for love, that

evil blossom . . . born
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
Blood-red and bitter of fruit,

represented here by the cold and chaste Atalanta,

She the strange woman, she the flower, the sword,
Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to men,
Adorable, detestable -- even she . . . .[18]

Swinburne's own interest in such fatal women cannot be denied, but what is sometimes forgotten is the dramatic and often historical context in which they have their being. These often-quoted lines tend to obscure the fact that what Swinburne actually gives us are psychological studies of individual women and of the men for whom they are often symbols of a whole sense of life. Along with an awareness of her power and her part in the eternal archetype, the golden-haired Rosamond is convinced of the beauty and sacredness of the flesh. She feels neither "shame" nor "fear" of scorn or retribution, and puts the sensual above chastity and concern for reputation:

I think that who so shall unclothe his soul
Of all soft raiment coloured custom weaves,
And choose before the cushion-work of looms
Stones rough at edge to stab the tender side,
Put honour off and patience and respect
And veils and relics of remote esteem
To turn quite bare into large arms of love,
God loves him better than those bitter fools
Whom ignorance makes clean, and bloodless use
Keeps colder than their dreams.[19]

Her "sweet" love for Henry has in it little of the extreme cruelty attributed to Swinburne's fatal woman; in fact, cruelty marks her opposite, the dark-haired Queen Eleanor, who bitterly imagines the mixed pleasure and pain that Rosamond and King Henry must enjoy together,[20] and who takes her revenge with a certain sensual satisfaction and a certain conviction that "[b]ruis[ing] . . . the gold snake's head"[21] is justified by God. Similarly, the golden-haired Denise is actually subjected to the amorous tortures of the sadistic Charles, and speaks to him in his own language primarily to learn from him the plot against the Huguenots. Although she professes love for the King, she is finally more dedicated to the cause of liberty and learns to despise "lewd obedience."[22] Here it is the Queen Mother, Catherine, who is her cruel opposite; like Eleanor, she feels she is God's instrument when she plans and executes the massacre of the Huguenots. Furthermore, although Mary Stuart is called a cruel Venus by Chastelard and is herself aware of her sexual powers,[23] she is much less the *femme fatale* than he imagines her to be. After he is discovered in her chamber, she vacillates between love (of a less fatal type than that in which he exults) and the very concerns that Rosamond abjures: shame, fear and, above all, fame. Finally, it must be remembered that Atalanta is herself not dedicated to Venus in either form but, somewhat sadly,[24] to the chaste and heavenly Artemis. Both Chastelard and Meleager make the women they love into objects of worship and destroy themselves in the process. Their attitudes can be related to those of the speakers in the central dramatic monologues of *Poems and Ballads*; in his early plays Swinburne also investigates the results of attitudes to existence quite different from his own, as it is presented in "Hertha."

Swinburne's fiction is perhaps the most neglected aspect of his canon (although the plays would run a close second). Yet his fictional works are interesting experiments in various modes -- the medieval, the satiric, and the poetic -- and all are concerned with the figure of the woman. In 1858, Swinburne planned and partially completed a "Triameron" of stories modelled on Boccaccio.[25] On the back of a page of his *Chastelard* manuscript, he jotted down the titles of some nineteen stories,[26] but only three of them were eventually written: "Dead Love," in which Yolande falls in love with the dead body of her husband's slayer and revives him with her sensual magic; "The Portrait," in which a beautiful woman's portrait is so powerful that all who touch it die; and "The Chronicle of Queen Fredegond," in which Fredegond bewitches the king with her beauty and slays his brother, his wife, and his son and daughter in order to rule triumphantly when the king himself is killed in battle. Also usually included in this group are "The Marriage of Monna Lisa," in which the pure maiden of Pisa dies on the wedding day of the man she loves, and, perhaps the most significant work, Lucretia Borgia: The Chronicle of Tebaldeo Tebaldei, which contains the same sort of adoration for Lucretia that Chastelard had for Mary and presents the same sort of conception of the holiness of the flesh put forward by Rosamond.[27]

Swinburne's novels, A Year's Letters (later renamed Love's Cross Currents) and the unfinished Lesbia Brandon,[28] both include central women figures who are individual blends of the cruel sensuality, cold chastity and, in the case of Clara Radworth, modifying concern for reputation of the women of Swinburne's early plays. The married Clara of A Year's Letters is described by Lady Midhurst as

> quite Elizabethan, weakened by a dash of Mary Stuart. At your age you cannot possibly understand how anybody can be at once exciteable and cold. . . . A person who does happen to combine those two qualities . . . can enjoy herself, her exciteability secures that; and she will never enjoy herself too much, or pay too high a price for anything. . . . I don't mean that their acuteness prevents them from being fools, especially if they have a strong stupid element in them, as many clever exciteable people have; notamment ladite Marie, who was admirably and fearfully foolish for such a clever cold intellect as she was. I fancy our friend has more of Elizabeth in her; quite as dangerous a variety.[29]

Of course, Redgie Harewood, Clara's ardent admirer, sees none of this in her -- as Lady Midhurst's shrewd letter supposes he will not. Instead, he sees her essence caught in the glance she gives him as they ride over the moors by the sea:

> I never saw her look so magnificent; her hair was blown down and fell in heavy uncurling heaps to her waist; her face looked

> out of the frame of it, hot and bright, with the eyes lighted, expanding under the lift of those royal wide eyelids of hers. I could hardly speak to her for pleasure. . . . I rode between her and the sea, a thought behind; a gust of wind blowing off land drove a mass of her hair across my face, upon my lips; she felt it somehow I suppose, for she turned and laughed.[30]

Redgie is an obvious and self-confessed portrait of the young Swinburne, as is Herbert Seyton of Lesbia Brandon.[31] Bertie's love for Lesbia is particularly considered to be a reflection of Swinburne's relationship with his "lost love," now conjecturally identified as his cousin Mary Gordon. Lesbia combines the strange sensuality of Sappho with the more vigorous masculinity of Atalanta, and is described by Herbert as

> dark and delicately shaped; not tall, but erect and supple; she had thick and heavy hair growing low on the forehead, so brown that it seemed black in the shadow; her eyes were sombre and mobile, full of fervour and of dreams, answering in colour to the hair, as did the brows and eyelashes. The cheeks had the profound pallor of complexions at once dark and colourless . . . ; she was warm and wan as a hot day without a sun. She had a fine and close mouth, with small bright lips, not variable in expression. . . . A certain power and a certain trouble were perceptible in the face, but traceable to no single feature . . . .[32]

In both novels, love comes to nothing -- in the first because of Clara's marriage (and because of her own personality, so cleverly analyzed by Lady Midhurst, and Lady Midhurst's own manipulations), and in the second because Lesbia is "not marriageable"[33] and has a violent abhorrence of men.

Equally compelling and not as yet connected with Swinburne's own life are the other heroines: Amicia, Redgie's half-sister, and Margaret, Bertie's sister. Amicia, as described by her lover, Frank Cheyne, is the softer Pre-Raphaelite beauty of a Lizzie Siddal:

> a face . . . pale . . ., as if pulled down by its hair, heavily weighted about the eyes with a presage of tears, sealed with sorrow and piteous with an infinite unaccomplished desire.

> The old deep gold hair and luminous grey-green eyes shot through with colors of sea-water in sunlight and threaded with faint keen lines of fire and light about the pupil. . . . Then that mouth of hers and the shadow made almost on her chin by the underlip -- such sad perfect lips, full of tender power and faith, and her wonderful way of lifting and dropping her face imperceptibly, flower-fashion, when she begins or leaves off speaking . . . .[34]

Margaret, Lady Wariston, is a more vibrant and sensual version of the type, and the young Bertie is erotically drawn to his sister. When she comes to his bedside, Bertie pleads with her to unfasten her hair:

> she loosed the fastenings, and it rushed downwards, a tempest and torrent of sudden tresses, heavy and tawny and riotous and radiant, over shoulders and arms and bosom; and under cover of the massive and luminous locks she drew his face against her own and kissed him time after time with all her strength. . . .
>
> "I wish you would kill me some day. . . . Not like it? Shouldn't I? You just hurt me and see."
>
> She pinched him so sharply that he laughed and panted with pleasure. . . .
>
> He fell asleep with her kisses burnt into his mind, and the ineffaceable brand of love upon his thoughts; and dreamed passionately of his passion. . . . But the one keen and hard impression left on him by the whole day's work was this of desperate tenderness and violent submission of soul and body to her love . . . .[35]

After reading such a passage, one does not wonder why the staid Watts-Dunton contrived to "lose" several chapters of the manuscript until after Swinburne's death. As Philip Henderson suggests, the novel is much less inhibited and delves more deeply than do the beautifully controlled ironies of A Year's Letters: "There is much play with sexual ambiguity, sado-masochism, transvesticism, and the incest motive."[36]

These descriptions of the women in the novels are similar to those in Swinburne's impressionistic notes on Renaissance and modern painting, particularly "Notes and Designs of the Old Masters at Florence" (written in 1864, about the same time as much of Lesbia Brandon) and "Notes on Some Pictures of 1868."[37] While browsing in the gallery at Uffizi, Swinburne seems to have been particularly drawn to a woman's head "three times studied" by Michaelangelo:

> Her eyes are full of proud and passionless lust after gold and blood; her hair, close and curled, seems ready to shudder in sunder and divide into snakes. Her throat, full and fresh, round and hard to the eye as her bosom and arms, is erect and stately, . . . her mouth crueller than a tiger's, colder than a snake's and beautiful beyond a woman's. She is the deadlier Venus incarnate . . . Lamia re-transformed . . . the Persian Amestris . . . or Cleopatra . . . .

Also important and undoubtedly influential is his description of the fatal innocence of Andrea del Sarto's Salome as she dances before Herod,

> an incarnate figure of music . . . the song of a bird made flesh . . .; no tyrannous or treacherous goddess of deadly beauty, but a simple virgin, with the cold charm of girlhood . . .; a pure bright animal, knowing nothing of man, and of life nothing but instinct and motion. In her mother's mature and conscious beauty there is visible the voluptuous will of a harlot and a queen; but for herself, she has neither malice nor pity; her beauty is a maiden force of nature, capable of bloodshed without blood-guiltiness; the king hangs upon the music of her movement, the rhythm of leaping life in her fair fleet limbs, as one who listens to a tune, subdued by the rapture of sound, absorbed in purity of passion.

He also describes other types of women, the more mysterious and sorrowful women of Leonardo ("Fair strange faces of women full of dim doubt and faint scorn; touched by the shadow of an obscure fate . . ."), and the kneeling virgin of Mantegna, which he compares with Rossetti's early type of "clear holiness and grave beauty."[38]

In "Notes on Some Pictures of 1868," Swinburne analyzes in detail the two types of beauty which he sees captured in Rossetti's paintings, the sensual and the spiritual, "the siren and the sibyl." The first is Rossetti's "Lilith,"

> the idea incarnate of faultless fleshly beauty and peril of pleasure unavoidable. For this serene and sublime sorceress there is no life but of the body. . . . Of evil desire or evil

> impulse she has nothing; and nothing of good. She is indifferent, equable, magnetic . . . .

The opposite type is embodied in Rossetti's studies of Beatrice and in his "Sibylla Palmifera," the "ideal and inaccessible beauty" who is surrounded by the "twin emblems of love and death," the poppy and the rose.[39]

In his critical essays on works of literature, Swinburne again tends to concentrate on the figure of the woman. Of course, his review of "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," also included in Essays and Studies, focuses on the figure; but he shows a particular interest in the woman-figure in other writers -- for example, Morris's Guenevere and Medea, Shakespeare's Cleopatra, Hugo's Lucrezia, and Blake's women (whom he valiantly tries to place in Blake's mythic construct). On the whole, Swinburne's literary criticism is less impressionistic than his art criticism, but he occasionally attempts to capture the essence of a writer's work by painting his Muse. In his comparative study of the Elizabethan dramatists, we have the following passage:

> The Muse of this poet [John Marston] is no maiden of such pure and august beauty as enthralls us with admiration in Webster's; she has not the gipsy brightness and vagrant charm of Dekker's, her wild soft glances and flashing smiles and fading traces of tears; she is no giddy girl, but a strong woman with fine irregular features, large and luminous eyes, broad intelligent forehead, eyebrows so thick and close together that detraction might call her beetle-browed, powerful mouth and chin, fine contralto voice (with an occasional stammer), expression alternately repellent and attractive, but always striking and sincere.[40]

Rossetti, the supreme stylist, has a Muse much like the women he himself paints:

> No nakedness could be more harmonious, more consummate in its fleshly sculpture, than the imperial array and ornament of this august poetry ["The House of Life"]. Mailed in gold as of the morning and girdled with gems of strange water, the beautiful

> body as of a carven goddess gleams through them tangible and taintless, without spot or default.[41]

Swinburne not only links the "eternal feminine" with the production of art -- as is subtly suggested in his description of Salome -- but also highly praises several women writers. E.B. Browning and Charlotte Brontë are particularly -- perhaps too highly, as is often the case with Swinburne -- praised; but it is Sappho, the "Tenth Muse,"[42] who is for Swinburne the ultimate lyrical voice. He expresses admiration for her in his criticism and his personal letters, and evokes her in his own poetry from "Anactoria" of his earliest volume to "On the Cliffs" of Songs of the Springtides (1880).

It is on Poems and Ballads of 1866 that Swinburne's reputation was established. Chastelard (1865) worried a few, but Poems and Ballads shocked many. As suggested previously, what was particularly disturbing was the perverse sensuality of the volume and the presentation of an image of the female quite unlike that which preceded it -- in the somewhat selective memories of the reviewers, at least. The reaction of an Edinburgh reviewer is representative:

> into the midst of a well-regulated and self-respecting society, much moved by Tennyson's Idylls, and altogether sympathetic with the misfortunes of the blameless King -- justly appreciative of the domestic affection so tenderly portrayed by Coventry Patmore's Angel in the House . . . Mr. Swinburne charged impetuously with his Poems and Ballads.[43]

In his more considered estimation of the volume in the Saturday Review, John Morley declared that Swinburne at least

> deserves credit for the audacious courage with which he has revealed to the world a mind all aflame with the feverish carnality of a schoolboy over the dirtiest passages in Lemprière. . . . It is not everybody who would care to let the world know that he found most delicious food for poetic reflection in the practices of the great island in the Aegean, in the habits of Messalina, of Faustina,

> of Pasiphaë. Yet these make up Mr. Swinburne's version of the dreams of fair women. . . . Is purity to be expunged from the catalogue of desirable qualities?[44]

The later critical articles by Austin (and by Buchanan) are but a repetition of such observations and accusations.

Swinburne's femme fatale, particularly that of Poems and Ballads, has continued to elicit the most critical attention, especially from general literary critics but also from many Swinburne specialists, and to have the most influence on later nineteenth-century writers. Mario Praz's La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romantica, 1930, translated as The Romantic Agony in 1933, is the best example of the way in which the general critic treats Swinburne. In his chapter "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and in his Appendix "Swinburne and 'Le Vice Anglais,'" Praz presents a detailed documentation of the femme fatale in Swinburne's works and, following Lafourcade, relates the prevalence of this image to Swinburne's own peculiar sexual tendencies, his algolagnia, which he was encouraged to explore and express by the literary fashions of the day. Praz's book is still the most important study of the sources and the subsequent influence of Swinburne's femme fatale -- and of the gradual dominance of this woman in the literature of the last half of the century as a whole.

It has, however, serious limitations, both as a study of Romanticism and as a study of Swinburne. First of all, Praz fails to deal with, even in terms of contrast, the more prevalent image of the luminously ideal maiden which is at the center of Romantic imagery and is intimately related to the predominant philosophy -- metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics -- of Romanticism itself. Secondly, he does not relate the presence of her opposite in Romantic poetry and the eventual dominance of this femme fatale in what should be considered Post-Romantic poetry as a sign of a growing "metaphysical crisis." Croce, in his brief review of Praz's book, presents somewhat the same criticism in more general terms: he suggests that Praz fails to deal with the more positive aspects of Romanticism in his study, that he neglects to distinguish adequately between Romantic and Post-Romantic poetry, and, most importantly, that he does not seek a cause for the emergence of the darker tendencies which he documents.[45] Apparently Praz originally conceived his book from several spermatic suggestions in Croce's earlier study of nineteenth-century literature;[46] yet in his "Foreword" to the first English edition he adds his defence against Croce's criticisms. Denying the worth of any "attempt to trace the sources of the aberrations of a period to a metaphysical crisis,"[47] he maintains that he is content to present primarily a source study of the emerging literary fashion in which the fatal woman plays a central role and to leave ultimate conclusions to the reader.[48]

When dealing with Swinburne, Praz does, as previously suggested, provide some cause for the prevalence of the femme fatale in his works: Swinburne's algolagnia is behind his interest in the image, and not just literary fashion. But Praz's treatment of him is still limited, ignoring as it does not only the "metaphysical crisis" behind the darkening image of the woman generally but also Swinburne's particular use of the image to explore his own conception of the causes of the crisis. Praz, like many critics, concentrates on Swinburne's early work -- understandably, perhaps, but even here overestimating the influence of the Marquis de Sade and others and completely neglecting the dramatic nature of Swinburne's compositions -- and suggests of the later work only that Swinburne's dedication to liberty is a "sublimation" of his desire to be "the powerless victim of the furious rage of a beautiful woman."[49]

It is the contention here, then, that Swinburne's femme fatale should first of all be seen in the light of the symbolic implications of her predecessors, and then be more adequately related to the more positive and comprehensive image of the woman in Swinburne's work as a whole, particularly in those works in which he speaks in his own voice. It is thus necessary to begin with a brief look at the implications of the image of the woman in the Romantic and Victorian literature which preceded and influenced Swinburne. Although it is impossible to draw together the causes for the growing dilemma in the nineteenth century into that comprehensive synthesis which William Troy says Praz "disdained,"[50] it is possible here to relate the image of the ideal maiden to the central philosophy of Romanticism and the femme fatale to the breakdown of Romantic doctrines.

The image of the woman has always been linked with "the other," with the essence of nature and with that part of the individual soul which is strange and "other" and connected with the divine forces of nature. As established by Riencourt and others, in "pre-history" the Great Mother was worshipped and the woman revered -- religiously, if not socially -- as an intermediary between man and nature's necessary but often-frightening powers.[51] The power of the Great Goddess waned when linear time, patristic culture and transcendent religion -- as Joseph Campbell puts it, "the solar principle of rational self-reliant consciousness"[52] -- gained ascendancy, but she returned in full force when the Romantics began to rediscover the divinity in man and nature.

The central "Romantic moment," as most critics would agree, is this rediscovery -- the imaginative reconciliation of the self and the "other," or the "I am" and the "it is" both within and without. As Wellek maintains,

> What is called Romanticism in England and on the Continent is not the literal vision of the mystics but the concern for the reconciliation of subject and object, man and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness . . . .[53]

Love and the symbol of the woman are intimately connected with this central Romantic moment. Love is seen not only as the force uniting the opposites of nature but also that inmost power which links man to nature. One of the most comprehensive statements of this conception is given by Schelling in "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature": in discussing the beauty of nature he suggests that,

> because the spirit of nature everywhere else appears independent of the soul, and even somewhat in conflict with it, it seems here to blend with the soul as though by virtue of a voluntary accord and the inner fire of divine love; with sudden clarity there comes upon the beholder remembrance of the original unity of the essence of nature with the essence of the soul: the certainty that all antithesis is only apparent, and that love is the tie between all beings and pure goodness the fundament and content of the whole of creation.[54]

The Romantics with whom Swinburne was most familiar also connect love with the force of nature and the power of the imagination. Wordsworth, of course, concludes The Prelude with the suggestion that imagination and love are one and the same and that both have been his theme.[55] Similarly, in On Love Shelley defines love as "the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man but with everything that exists. We are born into the world, and there is something in us which, from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness."[56] And in the later Defence of Poetry he connects its power with that of the imagination:

> The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause.[57]

Coleridge also connects love and the workings of the imagination in his poetry and in his prose.[58] Furthermore, even though his "Asra" poems are little known and not among his best works, like Shelley he also employs the woman as the symbol of the ideal in the real world and the "God within."[59] The Romantics draw this central symbol, of course, from the traditional imagery of mysticism[60] and of courtly love. There is, however, as suggested above and in Wellek's definition of Romanticism, an essential difference: union in the mystical tradition is ultimately with the transcendent Godhead, and the same may be suggested of the courtly love tradition as it was understood by the _dolce stil novisti_ poets and Dante.[61] But the Romantics generally sought union with the immanent ideal -- the eternal residing in the flux of the temporal. As Abrams has established, for the Romantic poets the woman is a central symbol of the divine force within the soul and within nature, and marriage is a "prominent period metaphor" for union with this divine.[62] Novalis's suggestion that Romanticism is that "higher philosophy [which] is concerned with the Marriage of Nature and Mind"[63] is not only a general summary of Romantic philosophy but also an indication of one of its central poetic symbols.

As Northrop Frye points out in "The Romantic Myth," even though the Romantic quest inward and downward retains some of the darkness associated with these realms in "upward mythology," they are ultimately seen as divine by the English Romantics.[64] Much of the darkness which the Romantic experiences, as Frye also suggests elsewhere, is first of all connected with the state of the poet-perceiver prior to the central moment of union, that state in which he is isolated by his own self-consciousness and nature is "concealed":

> Elusive nymphs or teasing and mocking female figures who refuse to take definite form, like the figure in Alastor or Blake's "female will" types; terrible and sinister white goddesses like La Belle Dame sans Merci; or females associated with something forbidden and demonic, like the sister-lovers of Byron and Shelley, belong to the concealed aspect [of nature].[65]

Peckham's famous "negative Romanticism" -- as it is presented in "The Dilemma of a Century" -- is, in part, the state which Frye describes, and it is followed in his schemata by the state of "Analogism" (what we have called the central Romantic moment of the union of man and nature).[66] Secondly, the difficulties and dangers of the "quest" for union were not overlooked by the Romantics. As Gérard reminds us about Wordsworth, the Romantics did attempt to "come to terms with the reality of evil, of loss, and of pain without giving up [their] idealistic insight into the nature of life and the world"; they usually did so, as Gérard establishes so well about Keats, by considering evil and suffering as a part of the process of union and asserting the "creative value of suffering."[67] The dark lady in Romantic poetry, then, may be generally considered to be associated with the difficulties of achieving union and the ideal maiden, more prevalent in the Romantic tradition as Swinburne knew it, symbolic of the achievement of the central moment of union.

We may, however, be much more specific about the image of the ideal maiden and the dark lady in Romantic poetry by examining the subtle but significant differences in the individual Romantic poet's interpretation of what Novalis called the "higher philosophy." These differences pertain to each poet's conception of the ultimate source of the divine power discovered during the "marriage" of man and nature: in the first and most Neo-Platonic interpretation, a transcendent source is still retained; in the second and more subjectively idealistic interpretation, the source is within Man himself; and in the third and pantheistic interpretation, the source is within Nature and man is but her highest evolution. Thorlby speaks of the last two tendencies in his "Introduction" to The Romantic Movement:

> the religious mystery became divided between two metaphysical principles which dominate the vast mass of . . . Romantic philosophy. On the one hand, a metaphysic of nature, of natura naturans . . . ; sometimes it takes the form of pantheism or a sentimentalized travesty of Spinoza, but a profounder grimmer form in Schopenhauer's concept of the Will. On the other hand, an idealistic metaphysic of mind, debatably confined to analytic limits in Kant, but soon developing into a Romantic vision of the world coming to be what it is only through human consciousness, where it finally comprehends itself and is redeemed.[68]

Shelley will be considered here as an example of the Neo-Platonic or panentheistic position, Blake of the "I am" position, and Goethe of the "it is." It must be stressed, of course, that an analysis of possible individual ambiguities or developments cannot be considered here. Shelley, for example, begins (according to most critics) in such early poems as Queen Mab with a kind of materialistic pantheism and ends in his later works with a kind of subjective idealism (or, to other critics, with an absolute disillusionment with the whole process of idealizing the recalcitrant real). But here we will refer to what can be seen as major tendencies in the main body of his work and focus primarily on the image of the woman.

There have been many contrasts drawn between Wordsworth's or Goethe's "naturalism" and Shelley's "mysticism," to use the terms adopted by Beach and Perkins.[69] It is certainly true that the mature Shelley never stresses outward phenomena to the extent that Goethe does or in the concrete manner that Wordsworth does. Instead, his imagery is much more evanescent and fleeting: his poetry is pervaded by such images as rushing winds, flowing streams and transforming shapes of clouds. But behind such external transformations of water to vapour to rain _is_ an unchanging essence -- one, like the moon in _Epipsychidion_, which is "ever . . . transformed, yet still the same."[70] Shelley is concerned with this essence, the inward force of both nature and man and, primarily, with man's own ability to recognize and therefore realize the immanence of deity. He is not a mystic, denying the ultimate reality of this world and desiring to ascend to the ideal realm; instead, he is a Neo-Platonic panentheist, realizing that the ideal world participates in this one and that man must imaginatively perceive that participation. Indeed, as previously suggested, deity is wholly immanent in the early Shelley. In two separate letters of 1811, for instance, Shelley defines "God" as "the Soul of the Universe, the intelligent and necessarily beneficent, activating principle" and as "merely . . . a synonym for the _existing power of existence_ . . . ."[71] _Queen Mab_ (1813) reconfirms this identification. Shelley in this poem sees man's mind as the highest evolution of nature, evil as man's separation from the harmonious laws of nature and adherence to the unnatural dictates of political and religious institutions, and regeneration as the inevitable reunion of man with nature. He looks forward to the time when "man, with changeless Nature coalescing /Will undertake regeneration's work"[72] and a kind of Godwinian future paradise will be achieved. This hope persists through Shelley's life, even though the means of its achievement change.

The change in Shelley's thought from pantheism to panentheism can be seen in "Mont Blanc" (1816). Although countless alternative readings of this difficult poem have been put forward, the Neo-Platonic one supported by Notopoulos is the most convincingly whole.[73] Mont Blanc is the sublime emblem of the transcendent and unknowable "source of Power."[74] The silence and coldness of the mountain emphasize the unknowableness of the One, but more often in Shelley the transcendent source is the sun, indwelling and irradiating, as in Plotinus's metaphor. In Adonais, Shelley combines Plotinus's major metaphors of emanation and speaks of the "burning fountain."[75] In "Mont Blanc"itself, the Arve, flowing "From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,"[76] is the immanent aspect of deity and the emblem of the spiritual force running through nature (the ravine or "many coloured vale") and through the mind of man. This mutual source accounts for the sympathy of the mind with nature and for the mind's "unremitting interchange /With the clear universe of things around." Yet man's mind also has its own "secret springs," flowing from the "cave" of imagination within Mont Blanc itself, which allow him to actively perceive the deity within and without and to intuit its transcendent source.[77] Thus, as for Plotinus or Cudworth, it is the power of the Intellectual Principle within that allows man to comprehend "whatsoever symbolizes with it in corporeal things."[78] In the last lines of the poem, Shelley reinforces this idea that phenomena would cease to be symbolic of the power within and above if man's imagination "could not accomplish the symbolic linking." If it cannot, then nature is "blind to us," an object to us.[79]

The importance of the divine imagination is also indicated in the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (also 1816). Although it has been suggested that the "spirit" of the opening lines visits the world only "inconstantly" and "fleetingly,"[80] this seeming inconstancy is but a result of man's own inconstant ability to perceive imaginatively -- the same inconstancy more directly maintained in Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode."[81] Correspondingly, this imaginative power is not a visitation from without, but a power within man himself. In the "Hymn" (and occasionally in the *Defence of Poetry*), Shelley also seems to imply, as did Plato in the *Ion*, that man is but a vessel momentarily filled with the presence of divinity. But in translating the *Ion* itself, Shelley renders Plato's "by divine influence" as "from the impulse of divinity *within*."[82] And in the *Defence*, written at the same time that the *Ion* was translated, Shelley affirms that poetry is stamped "with the image of the divinity *in* man," that it "redeems from decay" the "divinity *in* man," and that poets serve "the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul."[83] As Wasserman also notes, this same imagery is used in conjunction with the more pervasive image of the cave of the mind (used in "Mont Blanc") in the following manuscript passage meant for the "Ode to Liberty":

> Within <the temple> a cavern <of the mind of man> man's inmost
> <trackless> spirit
> Is throned <an idol>, so intensely fair
> That the adventurous thoughts which wander near it
> Worship -- as they kneel, <like votaries,> wear
> The splendor of its presence -- & the light
> Penetrates their dreamlike frame
> Till they become charged with the strength of flame
> . . . .
> . . . .
> They forever change and pass but it remains the same.[84]

To return to the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," it is this permanent presence within man which allows him to perceive the presence of spirit within the changing "forms" of nature, and which, as he says in the Defence, "strips the veil of familiarity from the world and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms." In this sense, then, poetry "creates anew the universe."[85]

The image of the paradise creatively perceived also recurs throughout Shelley's poetry. From Queen Mab onward, his poems often involve a magic journey of the mind by boat or winged chariot to a bright island bower or paradise. Again, this is not a mystic flight from dark reality, but a journey to man's inmost self. As Rogers quite rightly points out, Shelley's imagery of boat, pilot, and isle is linked with his conception of the Platonic and Neo-Platonic daemon. In the Symposium, the daemon, a "most excellent pilot,"[86] is an intermediary spirit occupying intermediary space and linking man with the gods; but in the Timaeus it is the highest aspect of man's soul, and in the Cratylus achieving the divinity within is linked with the paradisaical golden age. Shelley's own golden isles metaphorically occupy "intermediary space"; as he says in Epipsychidion,

> It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
> Cradled, and hung in clear tranquility;
> Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
> Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young Air.[87]

When the poet or creative perceiver achieves this isle or the state of mind it symbolizes, he becomes one with the daemon, himself linking heaven and earth. When all minds have achieved this state, the paradisaical island will become a universal Eden and the golden age will be restored.

Also inextricably linked with Shelley's image of the island paradise (and with that of the throne within the cave) is his equally pervasive image of the woman, who is the embodiment of Intellectual Beauty, Love and Imagination. Indeed, in the Epipsychidion the images of island and woman are fused:

> the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
> Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
> Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
> Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
> Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
> An atom of th' Eternal . . . .[88]

Emilia herself is the ideal within and without, and union with this sister-bride of his soul is the actualization of his "atom of th' Eternal" and therefore also his "unveiling" of nature. She is also described as a "shadow of some golden dream," and the moment of union as when "The fountains of our deepest life shall be / Confused in passion's golden purity."[89]

In Prometheus Unbound this union is accomplished on a cosmic scale. Prometheus, as a representative mind, becomes one with Panthea, the Intellectual Principle within (literally, "deity in all"); and, as the mind of mankind, he becomes one with Asia, the Intellectual Principle itself and therefore the spirit animating nature. Although the three sisters usually have been seen as "ascending aspects of love,"[90] they can be more precisely delineated by their connections with Shelley's other woman figures and by their functions in the drama itself. Ione is Prometheus's individual sensibility; Panthea is his epipsyche or that portion of the ideal which, as Shelley says in On Life, is contained in all minds. Thus, in her dream, Panthea is reunited sexually with Prometheus before she can leave Ione and journey to Asia, Intellectual Beauty and the "Light of Life" to Panthea's moon. The initial "going out of our own nature," as Shelley says in the

Defence, the selfless *agape* principle manifested in Prometheus's forgiveness of Jupiter, is now completed by the *eros* principle, the "identification of ourselves with the beautiful" and the ideal. The union of Prometheus and Asia accomplishes regeneration's work. Evil, or the separation of man and nature, is overcome and heaven and earth are realized as one.

Although, as we have shown, Shelley is not a mystic, he does envision a transcendent source; and because of this, he does occasionally manifest a desire for the perfect unity which can only be achieved through death. In "Adonais" by the very subject of the poem he is led (as was Plotinus at moments) to express the desire of the "pure spirit" within to "flow / Back to the burning fountain whence it came, / A portion of the Eternal."[91] His early poem, "Alastor" (1815), had been an allegory of the necessary connection between the two realms, the ideal and the real, and the two types of love, heavenly and earthly. As he says in his "Preface," the poet-persona conceives of a being who "unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful"[92] and rejects all imperfect manifestations of his apprehension of the Ideal. This to Shelley is a kind of moral death; however, union with this woman is gloriously and sensually celebrated in the poem. Keats's *Endymion*, it may be added, also proclaims the necessary link between the real and the ideal: at the end of his quest Endymion is prepared to realize that Cynthia and the Indian maiden are one and the same woman. It may also be suggested that "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," which employs, among other things, the tradition of the cruel mistress of courtly love, is also a kind of warning against separating these worlds.

Even though Blake has often been placed in splendid isolation by his critics and Goethe outside of Romanticism itself by some of his continental critics, they will be the examples here of the "I am" and "it is" interpretations. Blake's universe is much like that which the Romantics interpreted Fichte as putting forward. Blake's Archetypal Man, Albion, of whom creative Imagination is the heart, can be compared, again very generally, to Fichte's Absolute Ego. The essence of man, and each man at the height of his creative vision, is God and "there is no other God."[93] Correspondingly, Non-Ego or "all else" is but the creation of the Human Imagination. "All Things Exist in the Human Imagination":

> in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven
> And Earth and all you behold; tho' it appears Without, it is Within,
> In your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.[94]

Nature, therefore, has "no Supernatural and dissolves"; Imagination alone "is Eternity."[95] But Nature assumes an independent existence with the fall of Albion into self-division. As Northrop Frye explains it, once Albion

> takes the fatal step of thinking the object-world independent of him, [he] sinks into a sleep symbolizing the passivity of his mind, and his creation separates and becomes the "female will" or Mother Nature, the remote and inaccessible universe of tantalizing mystery we now see.[96]

The result, then, of this separation of creator and created, Albion and his emanation or Jerusalem, is Vala or Nature, the shadow of Jerusalem who assumes her own independent will to which man becomes passive. Indeed Vala proclaims to the fallen Albion that "The Imaginative Human Form is but a breathing of [her]."[97]

Harold Bloom's account of Albion's fall illuminates further this essential difference between Jerusalem and Vala:

> The outer world of man ought to be what he both creates and loves, and the authenticity of that World is the guarantee of man's freedom, called Jerusalem or Liberty in Blake's myth. When Man comes to love what he has already made, and neglects the potential of further creation, then he substitutes Vala, or the possessive love of a fixed natural order, for Jerusalem. This is Fall . . . .[98]

Jerusalem, it should be added, is not only the emanation of Albion, but also the Divine Vision within each man; correspondingly, she is both the "form" and the "image" (garment of light), two words which are indistinguishable in Blake's vision:

> In great Eternity every particular Form gives forth or Emanates
> Its own peculiar Light, and the Form is the Divine Vision
> And the Light is his Garment. This is Jerusalem in every Man,
> A Tent and a Tabernacle of Mutual Forgiveness, Male and Female
> Clothings.[99]

By comparing the figure of Jerusalem to that of Asia, the difference between Blake and Shelley can be suggested. Shelley's own Archetypal Man, Prometheus, also contains the divine enshrined within him; yet, in contrast to Panthea, Asia herself is independent of the "mind of mankind." Asia is not, as is Blake's woman-city, the creation or emanation of Archetypal Man; instead, she is the Intellectual Principle itself, of which Prometheus contains only a portion (Panthea), and by which Nature is also spiritualized. Prometheus does not himself create Nature, but only creatively perceives or sympathetically identifies with it and therefore redeems both it and himself. Blake's Nature is the shadow of Albion's emanation, the Terrible Mother rather than the loving daughter, and the Great Whore. She, along with Enitharmon, the cruel and inaccessible Queen of Heaven,[100] is worshipped by man as greater than him and the source of his power. Blake appears to be objecting to the two alternative patterns that we have outlined (those in which the ultimate source is beside or above) and putting forward one in which the source of all is within.

Blake's vitriolic objections to Wordsworth's idea of man's "wise passiveness" to the influences of nature and to his more fundamental conception of the "ennobling interchange" between man and nature could also have been directed to Goethe in his pantheistic, Spinozistic stage. Goethe's contempt for the deists, who put forward "a godless nature and an unnatural God,"[101] was fostered by his early acquaintance with Plotinus and the Neo-Platonic alchemists, who offered the alternative view of the immanence of deity in nature and man. His scientific and biological interests led him to stress the "God in Nature," and in 1780, largely through the influence of Herder, he turned to Spinoza himself. What he valued most in Spinoza, as Pascal indicates, was that "he does not prove the existence of God, but shows existence as God."[102]

Goethe's attitude to man and nature can be seen in the poems which he collected in 1827 as Gott und Welt. In the opening poem, "Proomion," Goethe contrasts the transcendent God with the God who is one with the world, both form and energy, matter and spirit, becoming and being. In the earliest poem of the group, "Weltseele," he puts forward the idea that man's consciousness is the highest development of the dialectical evolution of the World Soul (not, as in Plotinus and Shelley, the direct emanation of the Intellectual Principle above). In such poems as "Eins und Alles" and "Dauer im Wechsel," he proclaims that within the many is the One and behind change is permanence, and that man can imaginatively perceive this unchanging unity.[103] As Murry explains Goethe's conception of the process of imaginative reunion, "the spiritual progress of man is a progress through three phases -- unconscious integration with Nature, conscious separation from Nature, and conscious reintegration with Nature" through the imagination.[104]

One must agree with Coleridge that Goethe's is a kind of "Plotinized Spinozism," as it tends to ignore the darker implications of Spinoza's philosophy. But some of these implications may be seen in some of Goethe's aphorisms on Nature and in his many statements on the daemonic. As well as reconfirming his conception of mind as the highest evolution of Nature, the aphorisms, although ultimately optimistic, reveal his awareness of the ambiguity of Nature's energies.

> Nature: we are surrounded and embraced by her -- powerless to extricate ourselves from her. She takes us unasked and unwarned, into the round of her dance and carries us away with her, till we are tired and fall from her arms.
>
> She is all. She rewards herself and punishes herself, gladdens and torments herself. She is rough and gentle, sweet and terrible, powerless and overwhelming.
>
> She is cunning, but with good purpose, and the best thing is not to pay attention to her wiles.
>
> She has brought me in. She will lead me out. My trust is in her governance; she will not hate the work of her hands. I did not speak of her; no, she has spoken all . . . .[105]

When Goethe speaks of the forces at the inmost center of man, he usually presents them as more chthonic and Dionysian than heavenly and Apollonian. Like Coleridge and Shelley, Goethe is fascinated with Neo-Platonic daemonology. Like them, he equates the daemonic with the powers which "well up" from the depths of the mind, and links this power with creative genius. However, certainly unlike Shelley, he conceives of it more as an undifferentiated force, working, as in nature, both destructively and creatively. In Dichtung and Wahrheit, Goethe speaks of this power as

> not divine, for it seemed irrational; not human, for it appeared without a mind; not devilish, for it could be beneficent; not angelic, for it had often betrayed malice. It resembled chance, being apparently causeless; yet it had some similarity to

> providence, for it hinted at connections. . . . This being . . . I have called daimonic after the example of the ancients and others who have thought like them.[106]

Goethe's fascination with the daemonic is reflected in his interest in Byron and Byronic figures; in other Romantic poets, the awareness of a darker, amoral power in nature and man's unconscious is linked with the figure of the woman. This connection can be seen particularly in the German Romantics (Hoffmann, for example), but also in Coleridge and Keats. Coleridge was certainly aware of the ambiguous energies of the unconscious (which he also equated with genius and imagination) and of nature herself,[107] and it is my contention that he intended the daemonic Geraldine to symbolize these energies.[108] Keats's Lamia, who is related to Geraldine and also reflects the daemonological tradition directly, could also be mentioned here.

The image of the woman, then, is perhaps darkest in those Romantics who did not consistently Plotinize Spinoza and recognized the ambiguous amorality of nature and the corresponding energies of the mind. But she also may have her dark aspects in the other two patterns traced here. In panentheists like Shelley, the remaining desire for absolute union with the transcendent source may lead to the depiction of the woman as an elusive or dangerous but beautiful female leading man to absolute union with her through death. (The Earth Mother of the pantheists may also, of course, be seen as luring man back to the womb and the tomb.) In Blake, as we have seen, both "earth" and "sky" goddesses can be destructive "female wills." But for other Romantics who lean toward a kind of solipsism, the woman figure may be depicted as luring man into a strange and isolated world of his own creation. Keats has been mentioned previously in possible comparisons with both

Shelley and Coleridge; Patterson suggests, however, in his excellent study The Daemonic in the Poetry of Keats that Keats's "intermediary realm" is the internal, isolated and morally neutral realm of the energies of the unconscious and that he had a great deal of difficulty connecting this realm with that of the Shelleyan ideal or with the real world.[109]

The predominance of the image of the fatal woman later in the century may be linked with the darkening view of nature and the consequent darkening of the conception of the unconscious mind. The profound influence of the findings of "higher criticism" and evolutionary science is a chapter in the history of ideas in the Victorian age which has been written before and will not be rewritten here. It may, however, be pointed out that the view of nature which culminated in Darwin's work did substantially darken man's view of nature. Some Victorians, to be sure, saw Darwin's work as providing scientific evidence for the theories of providential development or the Godwinian perfectibility of man. Draper's paper, presented at the Oxford meeting in 1860,[110] is an early example of this reaction to Darwin, one which the neo-Lamarckians attempted to continue. There is, however, a definite difference between "Darwinism" and "Darwinisticism," to use Morse Peckham's terms. "Darwinisticism" is, as he suggests, the ascribing of moral and metaphysical implications to the evolutionary process -- in the spirit of the early ideas of progressive revelation, of Hegel, and of the Victorian conception of a "far off divine event."[111] Although Goethe could be considered a predecessor of Darwin, he would have been overwhelmed by the vision of nature as purposeless force controlled by chance that Darwin actually revealed. Darwin himself, suggests Gertrude Himmelfarb, tried to maintain a providential view of the process but privately remarked to Hooker, "What a book a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low and horribly cruel works of Nature!"[112] Darwin is actually closer in his theories to the bleak vision of Spinoza unRomanticized and to Schopenhauer, who saw nature as "blind will." Darwin, then, but put the scientific cap on a growing pessimism about the benevolence of nature.

An important chapter in the history of ideas in the nineteenth century (and the history of rational psychology generally) which does not seem to have been written is that which traces the concomitant darkening of mind, the gradual movement from the conception that the center of the soul is the "divine spark within" to the Freudian idea of the unconscious as an irrational and amoral force. The essential connection between the unconscious mind and nature has been well documented, and L.L. Whyte's The Unconscious Before Freud is perhaps the best analysis of this fundamental link. As Whyte suggests, the unconscious mind is "the expression of the organic in the individual," and the development in the later eighteenth century of pre-evolutionary ideas "coincided closely with the progressive recognition of unconscious mental processes."[113] When the conception of the unconscious is divested of divine connections is difficult to say, and Whyte is disappointing here. He indicates only a shift of perspective when he suggests that to the self-conscious individual the unconscious will appear irrational and dark.[114] It may, however, definitely be said that the process drew from the Romantics, particularly the German poets who presented the daemonic, the dark double or the dark lady, or who hinted that the daemonic realm may be only an isolating creation of the mind and not a revelation of the divine. (Coleridge and Keats, as suggested earlier, participate in this as well.) It was influenced by the new view of nature which culminated in Darwin; it took much from Schopenhauer, who linked "blind will" with man's unconscious and controlling drives; and it culminated in the empirical psychology of Freud. Frye, among others, suggests the interconnectedness of all of these figures:

> In Schopenhauer, the world as idea rides precariously on top of a "world as will" which engulfs practically the whole of existence in its moral indifference. In Darwin, who readily combines with Schopenhauer . . ., consciousness and morality are accidental sports from a ruthlessly competitive evolutionary force. In Freud, who has noted the resemblance of his mythical structure to Schopenhauer's, the conscious ego struggles to keep afloat on a sea of libidinous impulse.[115]

In Freud's theory of the unconscious, the divine has definitely disappeared; indeed, God is but a projection of the desires and fears of man, an exalted father-image which is related to the superego (the internalized voice of the parent and society).[116]

The Victorians who preceded Swinburne were aware, of course, of the growing tendency to see the energies of nature and of the mind as amoral and unguided. In Carlyle's Past and Present, for instance, Nature is the Sphinx,

> of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness. There is in her a celestial beauty -- which means celestial order, pliancy to wisdom; but there is also a darkness, a ferocity, a fatality, which are infernal.[117]

In his French Revolution, Nature, he suggests, "as green as she looks, rests everywhere on dread foundations . . . and Pan, to whose music the Nymphs dance, has a cry in him that can drive all men distracted."[118] In Characteristics, he adds, "on the bottomless boundless Deep whereon all human things fearfully and wonderfully swim, she will have us walk and build, as if the film . . . were . . . a solid rock-foundation."[119] This realm is also the "Domain of the Unconscious," and in Sartor Resartus it is suggested that madness is the "mysterious-terrific, altogether infernal boiling up of the Nether Chaotic Deep. . . . In every wisest soul lies a whole world of infernal madness, an authentic Demon-Empire . . . ."[120] A fear of the uncontrolled energies of the unconscious is, as both Le Roy and La Valley maintain, behind the political position that Carlyle finally assumed -- that the "masses" must be controlled from "above."[121]

As Carlyle's political and social concerns indicate, involved also in the "crisis" was the Victorian tendency to take the Romantic synthesis at a more realistic and practical level. The Victorians were generally more concerned with empirical and social realities, and the synthesis was also more difficult to achieve for the more self-conscious and socially concerned Victorians because, as Bayley suggests, their world was more recalcitrant.[122] The crisis and their subsequent sense of isolation were both metaphysical and social.

This apprehension of the darker aspects of nature and mind and the more recalcitrant realities of industrialized society can often be seen in their use of the image of the woman. Carlyle seldom employs the symbol, but his Blumine of Sartor Resartus is a provocative exception and sets the pattern for many later treatments of the implications of Romantic love. Teufelsdröckh's early tragic love affair is often considered to be a rejection of Enlightenment sentimentality, but instead reflects the central Romantic moment of synthesis presented symbolically in terms of love and the figure of the woman. The echoes here are not only of Geothe's Werther but also of Shelley and Novalis. "[N]owhere to the Young Man," writes Teufelsdröckh, "does this Heaven on Earth so immediately reveal itself as in the Young Maiden."[123] To such a man, as was Teufelsdröckh at the time, "visible Divinity" dwells in the woman, and his love for her is the "discerning of the Infinite in the Finite, of the Idea made Real . . . ."[124] Accordingly, the young Teufelsdröckh considers Blumine a "blossoming warm Earth-angel," a light descended into the shadows of the world.[125] Union with her will make him one with the universe and involve an "Apocalypse of Nature."[126] But Blumine's actual affinities are with the rich and respectable Herr Towgood, and Teufelsdröckh is left alone and despairing.[127] It is suggested that such a vision is but a projection of the young man's "fantasy"; he creates but a "Calypso-Island"[128] and does not truly recover "Eden." Teufelsdröckh's recovery is to be a more painful process and more all-inclusive in its sympathies. He has yet to encounter the "mean clay-hamlets of Reality,"[129] and goes from despair over the loss of Blumine to the condition of the "Everlasting No." He is still in the process of recovery when he perceives that individual joy is not his goal and commences to return to the realm of social action at the end of the book.

The failure of love as a means to or a metaphor for unified vision is also indicated in Arnold's poetry. Arnold tends to put the vision of love in the historical or personal past -- negating it almost before it is experienced. In "Isolation. To Marguerite," he suggests that "happier men," like the Romantics, "[h]ave dream'd two human hearts might blend" and were, "through faith," "released" from "isolation" and knew not their essential "loneliness."[130] But man now painfully perceives his isolation, an isolation not only from others and the world without but also from his own inmost and now "buried" self. Love, he says in "The Buried Life," may possibly release the inward "flow" and man may thus see "[t]he meadows where it glides." But his suggestion is qualified by his recognition not only that love is "rare" but also that when in love man perhaps only "thinks he knows" his inmost self.[131] Again, in "To Marguerite -- Continued" love hints at past connections, but this only produces a present "longing like despair." The imagery associated here with connection ("moon," "spring," "glens," "nightingales"[132]) is that which Culler so ably links with Arnold's depiction of the Romantic vision or with his longing for it and contrasts with Arnold's burning or "darkling plain" of the present.[133] Marguerite herself is associated with this natural world and its simple joy; but Arnold is part of a different and darker world.[134] Their parting, which seems inevitable, is also associated with Arnold's distrust as to whether she calls up his inmost self or only his lower passions.

Whatever the reason for their parting (and he gives several), Arnold concludes that "dreams . . . but deceive"[135] and that "some fair coast" has but lured him from his quest across the dark plain.[136] Only occasionally does love appear a welcome sanctuary, as it is in "Dover Beach"; and here it is divorced from the symbolic implications that it has in Romantic poetry. Furthermore, the often-quoted lines, "Ah love, let us be true /To one another!" should be related to Arnold's use of the word "true" elsewhere. In "Eurphrosyne," being true is for those too weak to face the world:

Truth -- what is truth? Two bleeding hearts,
Wounded by men, by fortune tried,
Outwearied with their lonely parts,
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear
Their lot was but to weep and moan.
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,
For neither could subsist alone![137]

The image of the woman is more prevalent in Tennyson's poetry and is involved in the central concerns of his poetry and of Victorian poetry as a whole. Tennyson's poetry reflects what has often been called the "Victorian dilemma" not only because it struggles to unify the increasingly fragmented but also because it attempts to present to society the possibility of unified vision. Inheriting the Shelleyan conception of the prophetic role of the artist, Tennyson lacks his firm faith in the sources of inspiration. In the early poem, "The Poet," for instance, Tennyson equates the role of the poet with that of Apollo. Born in a "golden clime," Apollo creates a second golden world or garden for man with "arrow-seeds" of wisdom and love.[138] In "The Poet's Mind" he adds that the luxuriant garden of poetic thought is "holy ground" not to be blighted by winter intrusions of scorn from the world without.[139] And in the related poem, "The Mystic," he suggests that even though the mystic, and by extension the poet, has reached, to quote Eliot, "the still point of the turning world," and from this "center fixt" has viewed the gates of "birth and death," he is still scorned by the masses.[140] To the difficulty of communication is added its price in "The Dying Swan," which suggests that though poetry may bring beauty and joy to the human wasteland, it is achieved by lonely sacrifice -- even as the "wild swan's death" song floods the barren plains with "eddying song."[141]

The poet's mind is, then, a "place apart," a secluded island, a sacred garden, or a lonely palace. Often this "place apart" is inhabited by a beautiful woman, one who has never known the communication of love or is separated from her lover (the external world). Isolation of the essential self is presented in those poems which Stevenson relates to the Shelleyan symbol of the "high-born maiden."[142] His primary examples are "Mariana" and, most interestingly, "The Lady of Shalott," in which isolation is definitely associated with the condition of the artist. Isolation is, however, not the only problem which Tennyson examines through the Jungian "soul-image" of the woman; he, too, questions the source of inspiration, and in linked poems presents the woman as a lure to a "Calypso" island of isolated and sensuous individuality. Examining the women of such poems as "Eleänore" and "Adeline," Ryals quite rightly links them with Keats's *femme fatale*.[143] But he connects the woman symbol only with the "lure of sensuous art" and not with the larger question (present in Keats himself) of the relationship between the "daemonic" realm and that of the ideal and of the real. And he does not include an examination of several significant poems dealing with the undersea world of the unconscious or with the realm of dreams. Yet in both types of poems the figure of the *femme fatale* is present. The world under the sea in "The Merman" is associated with a kind of aesthetic joy, but also with the purely sensuous and the erotic:

> I would be a merman bold,
> I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
> I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power;
> But at night I would roam abroad and play
> With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
> Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower;
> And holding them back by their flowing locks

> I would kiss them often under the sea,
> And kiss them again till they kiss'd me[.][144]

This realm is also associated with danger: the mermaid, who wishes to "sing to [herself]" alone "[i]n the midst of the hall," also wishes that

> all the mermen under the sea
> Would feel their immortality
> Die in their hearts for the love of me.[145]

The poems dealing with dreams are equally ambiguous. Once again, creativity is linked with isolation and with sensuality (and finally with guilt). In dreams, the higher conscience is drugged and loses its restraining influence; the poet is thus allowed to see those "visions of the night,"[146] those

> witching fantasies which won the heart,
> Lovely with bright black eyes and long black hair
> And lips which moved in silence, shaping words
> With meaning all too sweet for sound.[147]

Both Stevenson and Ryals examine "The Palace of Art," in which the isolated maiden is as haughty as the *femme fatale*, and both suggest that Tennyson came to terms with his *anima* here and resolved his dilemma. The same movement, they indicate, may be seen in *The Princess*, in which the equally isolated and haughty princess accepts union with the prince through the reconciling medium of the child. The maiden now abandons her palace of art for a "cottage in the vale,"[148] and Tennyson abandons sensuous art for socially-committed art. The "mysterious maiden" becomes the Victorian woman of the domestic love idylls and the "literary stock character" which critics praised and many poets disparaged.[149] Too often, however, it is forgotten that for Tennyson domestic love has symbolic implications: it is a means to or a metaphor for not only the union of the male and female elements of the psyche (the "sense" and "soul" of the *Idylls*) but also reintegration with society (marriage, of course, being the primary social bond). And too often it is not noted that the synthesis is often surrounded by darkness and chaos, as it is in the famous scene in "Enoch Arden,"[150] and that it breaks down entirely in the Idylls of the King.

Tennyson's femme fatale is perhaps the most interesting for our purposes here. Praz does not include the Victorians in his survey of this symbol, and Jerome H. Buckley considers that Praz's treatment of the femme fatale and her earlier counterpart, the Byronic male, has "little direct relevance to most of the major poets or to the great bulk of English Victorian poetry."[151] Yet Buchanan maintained that "The Fleshly School of Poetry" was a "sub-Tennysonian school" which drew its inspiration from such figures as Vivien and Maud:

> if in "Vivien" [Tennyson] has indicated for them the bound of sensualism in art, he has in Maud, in the dramatic person of the hero, afforded distinct precedence for the hysterical tone and overloaded style which is now so familiar to readers of Mr. Swinburne.[152]

As we will see, Swinburne objected strenuously to Tennyson's presentation of the figure of Vivien; but the fatal image of Maud which her lover creates is very much like Rosamond's self-image:

> What if with her sunny hair
> And smile as sunny as cold,
> She meant to weave me a snare
> Of some coquettish deceit,
> Cleopatra-like as of old
> To entangle me when we met,
> To have her lion roll in a silken net
> And fawn at a victor's feet.[153]

In other lines Maud seems the reincarnation of the archetypal fatal woman, as Rosamond suggests of herself.[154] Tennyson's poetry does contain more than the domestic heroines Austin contrasted with Swinburne's "Hetairae," and the image of the woman as a symbol of the darker aspects of the mind (alone or in connection with art) and of nature did not have to be imported entirely from France.

As may be seen by examining the symbol of the woman, the major Victorian writers were troubled with doubts; yet, as Houghton suggests, "[d]oubt never reached terminal scepticism" during this period of Victorian literature.[155] The poets fell back, as many of their modern critics suggest, on the old solutions -- on a belief in evolution in the progressive or providential sense, and on a trust in personal intuition or a kind of "illative" assent. More important, perhaps, is their increased sense of the importance of the often dark and stormy process of self-realization or their stress on action in the sense of ethical deed in a social context (both, of course, with the continuing hope of some larger truth at the end of the voyage, in this or a next world).

Of the Romantic poets discussed here, Swinburne's intellectual affinities are with Goethe, as Beach also notes.[156] Both were "convinced realist[s]" who opposed the other-worldliness and the subjectivity of some of the Romantic poets with whom they were familiar.[157] Throughout his works, Swinburne consistently condemns the principle of a transcendent source, whether it be the Christian God of "theism" or the more Neo-Platonic one of "theosophy." In a footnote to his essay on Blake, Swinburne defines exactly what he means by "theism" and opposes it to his own pantheism:

> Strained and filtered clear of extraneous matter, pruned of foreign fruit and artificial foliage, [the] radical question lies between Theism and Pantheism. . . . On the right hand, let us say (employing the old figure of speech), is the Theist -- the "man of God," if you may take his own word for it; the believer in a separate or divisible deity, capable or conceivably capable of existence apart from ours who conceive of it; a conscious and absolute Creator. On the left hand is the

> Pantheist; to whom such a creed is mainly incredible and wholly insufficient. . . . Theism is not expansive . . .: and the creeds begotten or misbegotten on this lean body of belief are "Satanic" in the eyes of the Pantheist . . . .[158]

Theism, Swinburne suggests elsewhere, is but "an assumption superimposed upon a mystery" and "introduce[s] an element . . . of doubt, discord, and disorder" into man's existence.[159] Swinburne never defines what he means by "theosophy," merely using it as a term of disapprobation.[160] In general, he uses the word to refer to all otherworldly tendencies other than the specifically Christian one. To him, Coleridge represents the theosophic strain in Romanticism. Speaking of one of Coleridge's letters which he read in Alsop's Letters, Conversations and Reflections, Swinburne suggests that it shows "how far apart his own theosophic mysticism . . . had drifted from the more clear and rigid views of a harder and sounder mind."[161] In another footnote entry he uses the same terminology: "Coleridge's personal influence as preacher or professor of ghostly dialectics and marshlight theosophy . . . was a thing distinct from his doings as a poet."[162] Wordsworth regressed even further than "theosophy" according to Swinburne and is associated finally with the hated "theism."[163]

Swinburne, unfortunately, seems to have known very little about Goethe's philosophy (or, for that matter, about German Romanticism as a whole). His main sources of information appear to be Lewes' Life of Goethe and the Conversations with Eckermann,[164] although he probably knew Carlyle's works on Goethe and was a friend of Bayard Taylor, the translator of Faust. Swinburne does not always agree with Goethe's critical judgments, particularly his praise of Byron and criticism of Hugo,[165] but he does generally approve of his poetry. Indeed, in an interesting footnote to The Swinburne Letters, Lang suggests that a poem which Swinburne sent to F.G. Waugh, asking him to note the particular merit of the last stanza, and which was mistaken by Waugh for Swinburne's own verse was actually "A Translation of Goethe's Proemium to 'Gott and Welt'" from the Spectator.[166] In this incident they are drawn together, as they are incidentally by some Swinburne critics.

Even though their ideas differ considerably from his, the Romantics with whom Swinburne considered he had the most affinities were Shelley and Blake. Swinburne does condemn the note of optimism which he detected in Shelley and the postulation of a transcendent source which he discerned in the poet. But he does defend Shelley against the common charge (which still persists in Shelley criticism) that he was a pure, if "ineffectual" mystic; and he particularly praises the early and more pantheistic Shelley. "A Refutation of Deism," for instance, is considered to be an important document:

> the design of reducing the concept of theism to an obvious and palpable absurdity, by demonstration of the assumed theorism that it must naturally and inevitably result in . . . Christianity, is carried out with more dialectic skill and more ironic ability than might have been thought possible for so young and ardent a novice in controversy.[167]

Swinburne, however, criticizes the early and pantheistic Queen Mab as "a work of impassioned rhetoric and passionate reasoning rather than poetic expression and imaginative thought."[168] It cannot be forgotten that Swinburne's judgment of poetry and of poets is made primarily on aesthetic and not moral or philosophical grounds. For him, the mature Shelley was the "perfect singing-god."[169] He was first of all a poetic model for Swinburne and only secondarily a philosophic ally of sorts.

Blake he altered into a pantheist of his own persuasion. Here again he does detect differences -- particularly a certain "mystical" element, as he calls it, which he could not accept[170] -- but he also tends to minimize them. As will be established in Chapter Two, the important element of pantheism for Swinburne is its belief in the divinity of man. In this belief, of course, all three poets meet. They all put forward the divinity of man and the necessity of his liberation from the oppressive rule of the tyrant God. Thus, by ignoring the source of the divinity in man, Swinburne could quite rightly maintain that he is of "the Church of Blake and Shelley."[171]

Wordsworth would seem to be a more natural ally for Swinburne; however, as suggested previously, Swinburne detected a return to orthodox Christianity in Wordsworth which seemed to alienate him -- as did Wordsworth's more conservative political position. Also, since Wordsworth had often been elevated by Victorian critics at Shelley's expense, Swinburne often pointed out his defects as a poet in order to encourage both an appreciation of Shelley and an appreciation of poetry generally for its aesthetic value rather than its philosophical or moral outlook alone. Wordsworth himself, Swinburne insists, "was wrong in thinking himself a poet because he was a teacher. . . . This radical and incurable error vitiated more than half his theory of poetry and impaired more than half his practice."[172] His famous remark that Wordsworth used nature "as a vegetable fit to shred into his pot and pare down like the outer leaves of a lettuce for didactic . . . purposes"[173] must first of all be considered a criticism of the unpoetized philosophy of some of Wordsworth's works; but it is also a criticism of that philosophy itself. Swinburne not only professed pantheism over any philosophy which postulated a transcendent source but also could not accept any brand of unqualified optimism, pantheistic or otherwise. Although he does point out to the Wordsworthians for whom the poet had become a solace that in many of his finest moments he was a poet of suffering,[174] it is my contention that he detected not only the inability to continually celebrate union with nature but also a note of too facile optimism in his work. Keats, in contrast, was not "taken by a meditative and moralizing spirit too apt to express itself in the tone of a preacher to whom all the divine life of things outside man is but as raw material for philosophic and theological cookery" and continued to celebrate "the splendour in the grass."[175] And Byron and Shelley "were not content to play with [Nature's] skirts and paddle in her shallows"[176] and could continually celebrate both "the splendours and [the] terrors of nature":

> This outward and indifferent nature of things, cruel in the eyes of all but her lovers, and even in theirs not loving, became as pliant to their grasp and embrace as any Clymene or Leucothea to Apollo's.[177]

As we shall see, Swinburne also includes in his conception of Nature the terrifying and cruel aspects of the Goddess.

Swinburne's stringent criticism of any "hope of heaven" or overly optimistic view of nature is in accordance with the findings of "higher criticism" and evolutionary science and is a result of the influence of such findings on his thinking. Swinburne's denunciation of such tendencies is even more direct when he is dealing with the Victorians. He criticizes not only those poets who resorted to the old solutions but also those who made poetry out of their own doubt, despair, and division. The first criticism is expressed in a fragmentary satirical poem written in the metre of Empedocles. Lafourcade quotes the following stanzas:

Thus runs our wise men's song:
Being dark, it must be light;
And most things are so wrong
That all things must be right;
God must mean well, he works so ill by this world's laws.

This, when our souls are drowning,
Falls on them like a benison;
This satisfies our Browning
And this delights our Tennyson:
And soothed Britannia simpers in serene applause.[178]

Although Swinburne learned much from Carlyle, he ultimately opposed not only Carlyle's aesthetics and politics[179] but also his essential philosophy. In Miscellanies (1886) Swinburne calls Carlyle "the Proclus or Plotinus of Neo-Calvinism"[180] and adds, "it may be said that Carlyle's own 'realized ideal' was to be a moonshine shadow of the first Knox."[181] His antagonism to Carlyle is often supposed to be a reaction to Carlyle's remark that Swinburne was "up to his neck in a cesspool, and adding to [it]," reported in a newspaper interview in 1874 with Emerson, who himself added that Swinburne was a "perfect leper and mere sodomite."[182] But Swinburne's antagonism actually goes further back than his knowledge of Carlyle's remark and his vehement attack on him in the Note of an English Republican on the Muscovite Crusade (1876) for supporting Russia in her dispute with Turkey. Much earlier than this Swinburne had reservations about Carlyle's political stance and had opposed him in the Eyre controversy and in Of Liberty and Loyalty (written in 1866 but not published until 1909), in which he takes exception to Carlyle's remarks on obedience and loyalty in the Edinburgh Rectorial Address of 1866. Reservations about his philosophy as a whole can also be detected in Songs before Sunrise (1871), as we shall see in Chapter Two. Swinburne himself proclaimed in his "Recollections of Jowett," "my own belief in the prophet of

Craigenputtock as an inspired guide and teacher did not long survive my teens . . . ."[183]

Similarly, although Swinburne was influenced by Tennyson[184] and continually praised the poet's "faultless and fervent melodies,"[185] he considered him faulty as a thinker and likened him to a "sentimental theosophist."[186] Swinburne wrote to William Michael Rossetti of having re-read Tennyson's "Higher Pantheism" after writing "Hertha":

> Having wound up my (not exactly theistic) lyric, I looked at Tennyson's 'Higher Pantheism' again -- not bad verse altogether, but what gabble and babble of half-hatched thoughts in half-baked words! -- and wrote at the tail end of it this summary of his theology:
> 'God, whom we see not, is; and God who is not, we see:
> Fiddle, we know, is diddle: and diddle is possible dee.'[187]

A variation of these lines concludes Swinburne's "The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell," a parody not only of Tennyson's method but also of his conception of a transcendent and immanent Godhead.[188] Swinburne also criticizes In Memoriam for its "pretentiously unpretentious philosophy"[189] and its "semi-Christianity"[190] and, as we shall see in Chapter Five, the Idylls for its abhorrent moral values. He seems to have been particularly fond of Maud, which Tennyson read to him when he visited Farringford, and, surprisingly, "Rizpah." In Swinburne's comments on "Rizpah" the same standards are at work as were in his comparison between Wordsworth, and Byron and Shelley. In the poem, Tennyson has fused the "twin passions of terror and pity"[191] and has come closer than Wordsworth did in "The Affliction of Margaret" to the "actual expression of very life itself in consummate and impeccable simplicity of tragic truth."[192] Echoing his earlier analysis of how Wordsworth differs from Byron and Shelley, Swinburne says in the late "Changes of Aspect" that Tennyson could occasionally

> wheel sharply aside from the usually gentle and idyllic shallows that lay dimpling and glimmering inshore, and strike straight into such splendid and stormy water as gave its deathless music to the deathless passion of Rizpah and Boadicea.[193]

In the same passage, Swinburne maintains that Arnold could not swim a stroke without Wordsworth. But this statement _is_ in direct reaction to Arnold's remark, published in his _Letters_ of 1896, that Swinburne was but a "pseudo-Shelley."[194] Swinburne countered in his essay on "Charles Dickens" (1902) with the suggestion that Arnold was but a "pseudo-Wordsworth."[195] They had had their critical differences about French and English poets, dating from Swinburne's Oxford days and culminating in their debate over the relative worth of the Romantic poets. Swinburne himself summarizes this debate, echoing the language of _Literature and Dogma_:

> . . . I cannot avoid the inference that the critic who places Byron above Shelley and Wordsworth above Coleridge is something not himself -- something, shall we say, definable as a stream of tendency making for uprighteousness in criticism and inconsistent with righteousness in poetry . . . .[196]

Nevertheless, Swinburne continued to admire Arnold's poetry and even considered that _Literature and Dogma_ revealed him to be at least a "moderate . . . free-thinker," as he "so distinctly repudiated the most objectionable 'Person,' the _moral and intelligent_ governor of the universe."[197] Swinburne's discussion of Arnold's _New Poems_ of 1867 is one of his most interesting and important critical articles, as he himself maintained.[198] He begins his review with a discussion of _Empedocles_, a poem to which he had been drawn when it was first published, and particularly praises the stark message of Empedocles' monologue, which is worth more to him than any of the comforting thoughts of "sentiment and tradition."[199] Although in other poems Arnold gives "signs of an inclination for that sad task of sweeping up dead leaves fallen from the dying tree of belief,"[200] in this work he presents the uncompromising truth about nature, God, and man. Nature is an indifferent force, working with no eye to man's good:

> Nature, with equal mind,
>   Sees all her sons at play;
> Sees man control the wind,
>   The wind sweep man away:
> Allows the proudly-riding and the founder'd bark.

God is but the creation of man, so that he may hope or escape from his pains:

> So, loth to suffer mute,
>   We, peopling the void air,
> Make gods to whom to impute
>   The ills we ought to bear;
> With God and Fate to rail at, suffering easily.

Man should instead learn to stand alone and rely on his own powers:

> Once read thy own breast right
>   And thou hast done with fears.
> Man gets no other light,
>   Search he a thousand years.
> Sink in thyself; there ask what ails thee, at that shrine.[201]

Indeed, Swinburne is so at one with Empedocles' "creed of self-sufficience," as he calls it, "which sees for man no clearer or deeper duty than that of intellectual self-reliance, self-dependence, self-respect,"[202] that he has a difficult time understanding exactly why Empedocles descends to the level of a "common thinker" and finally commits suicide.[203] Swinburne can only suggest that Arnold was here influenced by the (moral and aesthetic) "Philistinism" of Wordsworth. What Swinburne means by this is made clear when he compares Arnold's "Resignation" to Wordsworth's poetry. "Resignation" -- more poetic than Empedocles' speech but also proclaiming the same faith "in the necessity of things and in the endurance of man"[204] -- is better in both respects than Wordsworth's poetry. Here Arnold has

> nothing of Wordsworth's spirit of compromise with the nature of things, nothing of his moral fallacies and religious reservations; he can see the face of facts and read them with the large and frank insight of ancient poets; none of these had a more profound and serene sense of fate.[205]

In this same essay Swinburne also criticizes the spirit of compromise which he finds in Tennyson and Browning. He poses as a "French critic"[206] who suggests that modern poets have misguidedly attempted to play the role of "apôtres rèconciliateurs entre le croyant et le libre penseur."[207] Although he is not named, Tennyson is criticized in the following passage:

> Voici une belle âme de poëte qui pleure, qui cherche, qui envisage la mort, le néant, l'infini; qui veut peser les faits, trier les croyances, vanner la foi; et voici son dernier mot: Croyons, afin de moins souffrir; tâchons au moins de nous fair accroire à nous-mêmes que nous croyons à quelque chose de consolant. Il est doloureux de ne pas croire qu'on doit revivre un jour, revoir ses amis morts, accomplir de nouveaux destins. Posons donc que cela est, que cela doit être, qu'il faut absolument y croire, ou du moins faire semblant à ses propres yeux d'y croire, se persuader, se réitérer à haute voix que cela est. La vie sans avenir est impossible. Plus de raissonnements d'incrédule. Le coeur se lève comme un homme irrité et répond: J'ai senti![208]

This is neither good philosophy nor good poetry, says our critic, and Swinburne adds in his own voice that "[n]othing in verse or out of verse is more wearisome than the delivery of reluctant doubt, of half-hearted hope and half-incredulous faith."[209]

Added to these remarks in his review of Arnold's poem should be the important remarks which Swinburne added to his analysis of Rossetti's poems. Rossetti's art has a "Christian colouring," but it has nothing in common with the optimistic picture of Christianity in Browning and Newman or "with the semi-Christianity of 'In Memoriam' or the demi-semi Christianity of 'Dipsychus.'" At the same time, it is not the "hankering and restless habit of half fearful retrospect towards the unburied corpses of old creeds which . . . infected the spiritual life and disturbed the intellectual force of Byron . . ." and apparently Baudelaire as well. Swinburne, however, qualifies this last statement:

> The intermittent Christian reaction apparently perceptible in Baudelaire was more than half of it mere repulsion from the philanthropic optimism of sciolists in whose eyes the whole aim or mission of things is to make the human spirit finally comfortable. Contempt of sure facile free-thinking, still more easy than free, took in him at times the apparent reversion to cast creeds; as though the spirit should seek a fiery refuge in the good old hell of the faithful from the watery new paradise of liberal theosophy and ultimate amiability of all things.[210]

Here we have an indication of the kinds of "half-doubt[s]" and fears and optimism that Swinburne opposed -- "theosophy," it is interesting to note, now used to describe a kind of providential evolutionism.

When criticizing the Romantic and Victorian poets, then, Swinburne generally condemns any optimistic view of nature and any belief in a transcendent source which he detects in their work; although he does point to moments in their poetry in which they come close to his own vision of existence, he perhaps tends to underestimate their awareness of darkness. In his own poetry, Swinburne attempts to come to terms with darkness without despairing and without resorting to the "hope of heaven." His early works, particularly the central dramatic monologues of his first volume of poetry, analyze the results of both the "hope of heaven" and the disillusioned plunge into this world which does not entirely escape dualism because it still conceives of the world as a "fiery" "hell."[211] He also explores through his characters the despairing desire to escape entirely from the world of pain and change. These impulses are symbolized by the characters' conceptions of the woman, all of whom to Swinburne are "fatal women": the ideal maiden, the cruel Venus, and the Proserpine of immediate release. Behind his analysis of these attitudes may be seen his own, more positive view of existence, his belief that the essential amorality (rather than evil) of nature, the Mother, must be accepted. In his subsequent volume of poetry, Songs before Sunrise, his own conception of existence is put forward in a more direct fashion. Swinburne considered this volume to be central to his vision, and the central poem of the volume, "Hertha," to have "the most in it of my deliberate thought and personal feeling or faith."[212] It is thus necessary first to examine Swinburne's own conception of existence as it is presented through the figure of Hertha. Then we may return to his earlier work and establish its relationship with the "Hertha" volume.

Chapter II: HERTHA

Hertha is one of the main chthonic deities of Teutonic mythology, the Mother Goddess who symbolizes the mysterious and fertile energies of the earth. It is usually suggested that Swinburne's source for the name of his goddess is Tacitus's description of Nerthus or Hertha in Germania, 40[1]; but both Lemprière and Smith give short accounts of her, and Swinburne appears to have used their dictionaries often.[2] Both scholars summarize Tacitus's account of the goddess and of her sacred grove and chariot which were located on a distant island in the sea; Smith adds the significant suggestions that Hertha is to be contrasted with the "god of the region of the air" and that she is actually the "mother of the gods."[3]

More significantly, Carlyle had already made use of the goddess in Sartor Resartus, as other critics appear not to have noticed. In the chapter entitled "The Dandiacal Body" Teufelsdröckh suggests that the opposite of the Dandies, the Drudges, might be "worshippers of Hertha, or the Earth: for they dig and affectionately work continually in her bosom . . .; seldom looking-up towards the Heavenly Luminaries, and then with comparative indifference."[4] Here we have not only another important contrast between earth and sky powers but also a reference to Hertha in a political context. The chapter as a whole is an application of the clothes philosophy to immediate social and political problems. It points to the growing conflict between the rich and the poor, between the aristocrats, who had become idle and luxury-loving dilettantes, and the lower classes, who were beginning to organize (and indeed finally did in the Chartist Movement) to fight against oppression. The political context of Songs before Sunrise is not the rise of the lower classes in England but of the republican spirit, particularly in Italy; yet it is certainly conceivable that Swinburne had in mind Carlyle's use of Hertha in a book which he read and often quoted in his letters when he chose the goddess who was to voice the controlling philosophy of his own work.

Swinburne could have chosen to present his Earth Mother in one of her more familiar forms -- as Rhea or Cybele of Greece or Asia Minor, or as the later goddess Demeter. Cybele is alluded to in the earlier Poems and Ballads, and Demeter, in a sense, presides over the volume. Poems and Ballads includes "At Eleusis," Swinburne's recounting of the sorrow of Demeter, "the mother and mate of things,"[5] over the abduction of Proserpine and of her immortalization of Triptolemus. There is little suggestion in this early narrative poem of the implications of the Eleusinian mysteries, of the symbolic repetition of the "fate of all organic life," or of the birth of the child-god (which Kerényi links with the birth of Venus from the sea[6]). But we do have an image of Demeter as the sculptress of the forms of earth:

> I carve the shapes of grass and tender corn
> And colour the ripe edges and long spikes
> With the red increase and the grace of gold.[7]

More important to the volume than this imitation of Landor's rendition of the Homeric hymn to Demeter are Demeter's daughters, Proserpine and Venus. In the "Hymn to Proserpine," Demeter is the "mother" of both Proserpine, the "blossom" of the "earth," and the foam-born Venus, the "blossom of the flowering seas."[8] As mentioned previously, Venus and Proserpine are the main symbolic figures of Poems and Ballads, and many of the other women evoked in the volume are but incarnations of their spirit.

In Songs before Sunrise, however, Swinburne turns to Demeter's northern equivalent, first of all because he finds other Teutonic myths and symbols -- Igdrasil, or the tree of life, and Ragnarök, or the twilight of the gods, both also mentioned by Carlyle, this time in "The Hero as Divinity" of Heroes and Hero-Worship -- to be equally rich poetic embodiments of his philosophy. As we will see, Swinburne also perhaps chooses this form of the Great Goddess because he finds the "diversity" of Europe or the north a more fruitful focus than the "unity of Asia," to use Emerson's terms,[9] and because he intends to distinguish his philosophy and his political ideals from those of Carlyle.

Swinburne's Hertha is more than the goddess of earth (or, as in "The Hymn to Proserpine" and elsewhere in Swinburne, of the sea). She is the informing spirit which runs through land, sea, "through all things." To use Cudworth's phrase which the Romantics found so evocative, she is "Plastic Nature," creating and containing all opposites and reconciling the "contrarieties and enmities of particular things, to bring them into one general harmony."[10] She works by "dialectical proceeding," as Coleridge suggested of Bruno's Spirit of the Universe. He explains Bruno's "principle" in the Biographia Literaria:

> The principle may thus be expressed. The identity of thesis and antithesis is the substance of all being; their opposition, the condition of all existence, or being manifested; and every thing or phenomena is the exponent of a synthesis as long as opposite energies are retained in that synthesis.[11]

The World-Spirit which holds all in harmony is also identified by Bruno with the force of love:

> From this Spirit which is One, all being flows; there is one truth and one goodness penetrating and governing all things. . . . We are surrounded by eternity and the uniting of love. From this Spirit which is called the Life of the Universe proceeds the life and soul of everything . . . .[12]

We have already established that the Romantics often identify the force of nature with that of love, as Schelling's remarks in "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature" indicate. It may be added that Goethe makes the same suggestion in his aphorisms on Nature: "Love is her crown. Only through love does a man draw near her. She has put gulfs between all she creates, and all creatures long to embrace. She has set things apart, that she may bring all things together."[13]

Swinburne also sees the force of Nature working by "divine contraries," as he says in "Genesis," and he identifies this force with "love" in "Hertha."[14] Indeed, in the invocation to Love with which he opens his "Tristram of Lyonesse," Love is the same force as his Hertha:

> Love that keeps all the choir of lives in chime;
> Love, that is blood within the veins of time;
> That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand
> Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,
> And with the pulse and motion of his breath
> Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
> The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
> Through day and night of things alternative,
> Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
> The ebb and flow of dying death and life.[15]

In the movement of the verse itself, moreover, Swinburne captures the essence of this harmony of contraries, as he does in "Hertha":

> Beside or above me
>   Nought is there to go;
> Love or unlove me,
>   Unknow me or know
> I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken and I am the blow.
> (11. 16-20,72)

His poetic method is at one with his thought.

Of course, this general identification of Love with the Soul of the World is as old as Hesiod and a constant in Neo-Platonic and pantheistic thought. And, as Edgar Wind suggests in his Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, the idea that Harmonia est discordia concors is a favorite one in the Renaissance: Venus and Mars, or Empedoclean love and strife, were depicted as one androgynous figure, Love.[16] But it was Bruno who developed the Neo-Platonic idea into an immanent and pantheistic system. Swinburne's conception of the "Spirit of the Universe" is at one with Bruno's and with that of his pantheistic successors. Indeed, Bruno is celebrated in Swinburne's "For the Feast of Giordano Bruno" for his spirit which is as a "staff for man's free thought to walk alone" and in "The Monument of Giordano Bruno" for showing that man's only "grace for guidance" is his own soul.[17]

Swinburne's Great Goddess, like Bruno's Spirit of the Universe, is neither an emanation of the One as she is for a Neo-Platonist like Cudworth[18] nor a vicar of God as she is in the medieval Christian tradition. As the first lines of "Hertha" make clear, there is no God above or "before" this World-Soul:

> I am that which began;
>   Out of me the years roll;
> Out of me God and man
>   I am equal and whole;
> God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul.
> (ll. 1-5,72)

Correspondingly, in "Genesis" and "Hymn of Man" Swinburne presents alternative myths of creation to those of Neo-Platonism and, most specifically, Christianity. In "Genesis" Swinburne gives an account of creation much like that of Hesiod (repeated by Phaedrus in the Symposium): primeval chaos or night gives birth to the diverse forms of earth.

Slowly the strong sides of the heaving night
  Moved, and brought forth the strength of life and death

And the sad shapeless horror increate
  That was all things and one thing, without fruit,
Limit, or law; where love was none, nor hate
  Where no leaf came to blossom from no root;

The very darkness that time knew not of,
  Nor God laid hand on, nor was man found there,
Ceased, and was cloven in several shapes; above
  Light, and night under, and fire, earth, water, and air.

Sunbeams and starbeams, and all coloured things,
  All forms and all similitudes began [.][19]

Several interrelated myths of creation are hypothesized in the "Hymn of Man," and all are involved, as McGann suggests, with "Swinburne's humanistic parody of the Christian version of the world's beginning" -- "In principium erat verbum . . . et Deus erat verbum."[20] Swinburne here allies the Logos with the pagan (both Orphic and Indian) conception of the winged god of Love who is born from the "shell world-shaped"[21] of the primeval mother. It is possible that Swinburne derived this account of creation from Aristophanes' The Birds, as he later translated the following passage in his "The Grand Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes":

It was Chaos and Night at the first, and the blackness of darkness,
    and hell's broad border,
Earth was not, nor air, neither heaven; when in depths of the Womb
    of the dark without order
First thing first-born of the black-plumed Night was a wind-egg
    hatched in her bosom,
Whence timely with seasons revolving again sweet Love burst out as a
    blossom,
Gold wings glittering forth of his back, like whirlwinds gustily
    turning.
He, after his wedlock with Chaos, whose wings are of darkness, in
    hell broad-burning,
For his nestlings begat him the race of us first, and upraised us to
    light new-lighted.
And before this was not the race of the gods, until all things by
    Love were united[.][22]

In the "Hymn of Man," the first Word is not God's but "the word of the earth," "child yet no child of the night, and motherless mother of men."[23] Presenting the earth in much the same fashion as, for instance, Shelley presents Queen Mab, Swinburne describes her original beauty before she knew of the "rhythmic anguish of growth, and the motion of mutable things,"

> When her eyes new-born of the night saw yet no star out of reach;
> When her maiden mouth was alight with the flame of musical speech;
> When her virgin feet were set on the terrible heavenly way,
> And her virginal lids were wet with the dew of the birth of the day[.][24]

The first Word that she speaks is of the divinity of man: "Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things!"[25] This is, of course, why the poem begins with a series of questions concerning the creation of the world: it is impossible for man to reach back to first origins except in myth, as earth first speaks in him. As the following passage from the Rigveda will illustrate, in the "Hymn of Man" Swinburne is perhaps also echoing the poetic method of the Indian poem and at the same time altering its meaning to suggest that man is the god yet to be born:

> Then there was neither Aught nor Nought, no air nor sky, beyond,
> What covered all? Where rested all? In watery gulf profound?
> Nor death was then, nor deathlessness, nor change of night and day.
> That One breathed calmly, self-sustained; nought else beyond It lay.
> Gloom hid in gloom existed first -- one sea, eluding view.
> That One, a void in chaos wrapt, by inward fervour grew.
> Within it first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,
> Which nothing with Existence links, as sages searching find.
> The kindling ray that shot across the dark and drear abyss, --
> Was it beneath? or high aloft? What bard can answer this?
> There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces strove, --
> A self-supporting mass beneath, and energy above.
> Who knows, who ever told from whence this vast creation rose?
> No gods had then been born, -- who then can e'er the truth disclose?
> Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or no, --
> Its lord in heaven alone can tell, if even he can show.[26]

Swinburne asserts in his own poem that the "lord of heaven" will be of no help in answering these questions, since God is only man's creation.

> Foot after foot ye go back and travail and make yourselves mad;
> Blind feet that feel for the track where highway is none to be had.
> Therefore the God that ye make you is grievous, and gives not aid,
> Because it is for your sake that the God of your making is made.[27]

As both the "Hymn of Man" and "Genesis" maintain, man is the highest evolution of the spirit of nature, and God is but man's false creation. The same fundamental conception is also put forward in "Hertha."

The sources of "Hymn of Man" and "Genesis" have not been thoroughly investigated by other critics, and only a few have been suggested here; but the sources of "Hertha" have been examined quite thoroughly. Numerous vaguely pantheistic works, both "European" and "Asian," have been linked with the cosmology of "Hertha" and should be mentioned here, if only to help discredit the still-common assumption that Swinburne was divorced from the deeper currents of nineteenth-century thought. Georg Roppen suggests first of all that the "didactic form and prophetic tone" of the poem recalls the Edda-poems Havamal and Volusupâ . . . ."[28] The prose translation of the opening verses of the Volusupâ given by Mallet seems to confirm Roppen's contention:

> 'In the day-spring of the ages,' says the prophetess, 'there was neither sea, nor shore, nor refreshing breezes. There was neither earth below, nor heaven above, to be distinguished. The whole was one vast abyss, without herb, and without seeds.'[29]

Swinburne's general familiarity with and early interest in northern mythology has been established by Lafourcade. Around 1858, under the influence of Morris and drawing from Thorpe's Northern Mythology, Swinburne began a poem entitled The Travelling of Thor, which was to recount Thor's defeat of the Niedgard giant.[30] Swinburne would also have discovered then that the thunder-god Thor and all other aspects of the male principle were descended from the earlier female principle, Mother Earth.

Roppen also notes, however, the possible influence of Indian "pantheism." In William Blake (1868), Swinburne himself suggests that he is a "tentative . . . student . . . of the Pantheistic Poetry of the East."[31] In 1869, the year in which "Hertha" was begun, William Michael Rossetti confirms Swinburne's interest in Indian thought: in the Rossetti Papers he writes that Swinburne was very enthusiastic about the "Mâhabârata, which he had been looking at in a French translation under the auspices of [Thomas] Bendyshe."[32] (Thomas Bendyshe was the Vice-President of the Anthropological Society of London and, with Swinburne and Richard Burton and others, a member of its blasphemous counterpart, the Cannibal Club. Considering him a "raging and devoted atheist,"[33] in one of his letters Swinburne quotes with approval the beginning of Bendyshe's hymn, "Damn God, from whom all evils flow."[34]) Correspondingly, Lafcadio Hearn, for one, finds the fourth and fifth stanzas of "Hertha" to be "almost literal renderings of passages from the Sanskrit Bhagavad-Gita, -- the greatest of all pantheistic poems ever written."[35]

Hearn and other critics also suggest that the direct influence of Asian sources may have been supplemented by such indirect sources as Emerson's "Brahma," a poem which Swinburne said he and George Meredith admired greatly.[36] In Emerson's poem, too, we have the "reconciliation of opposites":

> They reckon ill who leave me out;
>   When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
>   And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.[37]

It is not surprising that so many influences have been put forward for a poem that is so fused and "concentrated," as Swinburne himself said "Hertha" was.[38] Swinburne seems to have been exploring many mythological accounts as he prepared to present poetically an alternate cosmology to the Christian one. To the specific sources which he was examining at this time should be added those with which he was generally most familiar and which continually inform his poetry and thought: the classical tradition -- here Lucretius, for instance, who not only celebrated the goddess Nature but also conjectured what she would say had she a voice,[39] or the "Tenth Orphic Hymn," which praises "Nature, all parent, ancient and divine"[40] -- and the Romantic tradition as a whole. Although perhaps more submerged in the account of creation in "Hertha" itself, these influences are generally more important to his work.

Whatever the verbal echoes, it must not be forgotten that for Swinburne the feminine principle is the self-sufficient creator and sustainer of life and, secondly, that man is her highest evolution. Swinburne presents both of these conceptions in "Hertha" through the image of the World-Tree, associated with the Great Goddess in all of her forms.

> The tree many-rooted
> That swells to the sky
> With frondage red-fruited
> The life-tree am I;
> In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves: ye shall live and
> not die. (ll. 95-100,76)

And, the final lines of the poem:

> One birth of my bosom;
> One beam of mine eye;
> One topmost blossom
> That scales the sky
> Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.
> (ll. 195-200,80)

Although, as we have seen, Swinburne was acquainted with the original

Teutonic sources,[41] his version of Igdrasil definitely echoes Carlyle's. The boughs of the Tree of Existence, Carlyle suggests in "The Hero as Divinity," "are the Histories of Nations. The rustle of it is the noise of Human Existence, onwards from old. It grows there, the breath of Human Passion rustling through it; -- or stormtost, the stormwind howling through it like the voice of all the gods."[42] Similarly, in "Hertha" Time "rustles" the branches of Igdrasil:

> The storm-winds of ages
>   Blow through me and cease,
> The war-wind that rages,
>   The spring-wind of peace,
> Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of my blossoms
> increase[.] (ll. 120-125,77)[43]

Although, as we will see, there is much in this essay with which Swinburne would violently disagree and seems indeed to ironically invert, he would have been interested in Carlyle's statements that Scandinavian and all pagan mythology had a "childlike way of recognizing the divineness of Nature, the divineness of Man," that Hero-Worship was the "tap-root" of paganism, and that existence first became "articulate, melodious" in Odin.[44]

Swinburne uses the tree symbol elsewhere in Songs before Sunrise to suggest that man is one with nature ("His soul is at one with the reason of things that is sap to the roots") and that man collectively is God, "the fruit of the whole,"[45] each individual being "a leaf /Of the manifold multiform flower."[46] He also uses the symbol to present his fundamental conception that both body and soul are divine: "Not each man of all men is God, but God is the fruit of the whole; /Indivisible spirit and blood, indiscernable body from soul."[47] Just as all forms are outward manifestations of Hertha's spirit (ll. 25,73), so the body of man is but the visible aspect of his soul. As Georg Roppen points out in this context, Hertha claims man both as the "fruit of [her] body" and "seed of [her] soul."[48] "Spirit and sense," to use the expression which recurs throughout Swinburne's poetry, are one.

This particular emphasis on man explains Swinburne's conviction that Blake was a fellow-pantheist. In William Blake (begun in 1863, substantially ready for publication in 1866, and finally published in 1868) Swinburne continually opposes Theism to Pantheism. In the language of "Hertha" he summarizes the difference: "God appears to the Theist as the root, to a Pantheist as the flower."[49] He considers the worship of the "flower" of creation, the "Human Form Divine," to be the essence of Blake: "Above all gods or daemons of creation or division, he beheld by faith in a perfect man a supreme God." Similarly: "'God is no more than man; because man is no less than God': there is Blake's Pantheistic Iliad in a nutshell."[50]

Swinburne notes several times that this divinity, in opposition to the dualism of theism, is of both body and soul:

> Clearly enough [this] was Blake's faith; and one assuredly grounded not on mere contempt of the body, but on an equal reverence for spirit and flesh as the two sides or halves of a completed creature: a faith which will allow neither licence to confute or control the other. The body shall not deny, the spirit shall not restrain . . . .[51]

Christ, maintains Swinburne, is for Blake "the incarnate type of Pantheism," not the God made flesh but the symbol of the natural Godliness of man:

> The very . . . kernel of [Blake's] creed is not the assumed humanity of God, but the achieved divinity of Man; . . . n[illegible]raculous passage into flesh, but a natural growth into godhead.[52]

Orc (or Fuzon) is Blake's Christ-figure, and he rebels against Urizen, the false tyrant God, and against the binding morals and laws of Christianity.[53] Orc is linked by Swinburne with Shelley's Christ-like Prometheus; in Notes on the Text of Shelley, Swinburne indicates that "[i]n this adoration of the personal Jesus, combined as it was with an equal abhorrence of Christian theology, it is now perhaps superfluous to remark how thoroughly Shelley was one with Blake -- the only poet or thinker with whom he had so much in common."[54] In his important letter to E.C. Stedman, Swinburne suggests that he is like both Blake and Shelley in "taking the semi-legendary Christ as type of human aspiration and perfection, and supposing (if you like) that Jesus may have been the highest and purest sample of man on record."[55] There is really not an equivalent figure to Orc or Prometheus in Songs before Sunrise (except in "At a Crucifix," where humanity is seen as crucified by priests and tyrants, and in "Christmas Antiphones"); but the idea is less directly present in the imagery of the resurrection of the daughters of the Goddess of Freedom. Although he does occasionally speak of the "sun-god Freedom," Swinburne usually substitutes Mother and Daughter for Father and Son, and generally avoids any associations with the male principle of domination.

Swinburne does have some difficulty (as Deborah Dorfman also points out in her study of Blake's reputation in the nineteenth century) when dealing with Blake's conception of nature.[56] He is aware that "in the poet's mind, Nature and Religion are the two fetters of life . . .; an obscure material force on this hand, and on that a mournful imperious law: the law of divine jealousy, the government of a God who . . . rules by forbidding and dividing . . . ." He first of all attempts to explain this only as Blake's hatred of "Rational deism";

it and "clerical religion" are "two equally abhorrent incarnations of the same evil spirit, appearing now as negation and now as restriction."[57] Thus, when he speaks of Blake's hatred of "those who adore nature; for mere nature is Satanic" he adds the following qualifications in a footnote:

> Who adore Nature as she appears to the Deist, who select this and reject that, assume and presume according to moral law and custom, instead of accepting the Pantheistic revelation which consecrates all things and absorbs all contraries.[58]

Rahab is therefore the "origin of religious restrictions and the worship of abstinence; mother of 'the harlot modesty,' and spring of all hypocrisies and prohibitions . . ."; and Tirzah, her daughter, is "'Natural Religion' (Theism as opposed to Pantheism), which would fain have the spiritual Jerusalem offered in sacrifice to it."[59] Jerusalem, Swinburne explains, is "Liberty, forbidding nothing and enjoying all, but therefore clean and not unclean: by whom comes indulgence, after whom follows redemption."[60] Thus, when Blake uses the term "Nature" in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" he speaks of it as those free and "natural energies" and opposes it to "the moral law and government" of Urizen; but when he denounces Nature in Milton and Jerusalem he is using it as "the contrary of that higher and subtler faith which he is bent on inculcating" and a synonym for "'deistical virtue.'"[61]

It is worth noting, though (as Dorfman does not), that Swinburne remains troubled by Blake's apparent rejection of nature and the contradiction between passages which celebrate "natural energies" and those which suggest that the soul eventually attains "deliverance from bodily bondage."[62] Occasionally Swinburne seems to suggest not that Blake's "higher and subtler faith" is of the freedom from "analytic judgement and lust of facts"[63] or from "deistical virtue," but that the soul works through such energies in order to achieve a state in which the material world -- nature and the body -- dissolves.[64] He detects an "Asiatic" or a "mystical"[65] element in Blake with which he is not entirely in sympathy. It is my contention that a statement like the following refers not to Swinburne's "art for art's sake" stance but to a basic disagreement with this aspect of his reading of Blake: "The present critic has not (happily) to preach the gospel as delivered by Blake; he has merely, if possible, to make the text of that gospel . . . more readable."[66]

Swinburne can, however, unhesitatingly proclaim to be of the "Church of Blake and Shelley"[67] in terms of his conception of the God of Christianity and of the necessary rebellion of man against this false God. In "Hertha" Swinburne proceeds from the general tenet that the only God is the indwelling spirit of things which reaches consciousness in man to a specific attack on Christianity. Here he insists that such a God is merely the unnatural (ll. 161,78) invention of man's own mind, the "shadowy" (ll. 93,75) image of his own light. This fundamental conclusion is reiterated throughout the poem: "Praying prayers to the God of their fashion" (ll. 70,74); "Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him with faith of your vows" (ll. 165,78); and "Thought made him and breaks him" (ll. 186,79). It is also present throughout the volume as a whole: in "Genesis," for instance, God is the "shade cast by the soul of man"; in "Hymn of Man," the "God that ye make you is grievous and gives not aid"; and in the "Epilogue," God "thunders by [man's] own will."[68] He had arrived at this conclusion much earlier than Songs before Sunrise: during his Oxford days he wrote an essay entitled "The Limits of Experience," in which he states that "much which has come to be regarded as intuitive and as it were indispensable to our existence and faculty of thinking -- is indeed mere matter of experience and previous acquaintance removed beyond the limits of consciousness or memory . . . ."[69] Included were the religious ideas which Swinburne himself had learned from his mother and lost at Oxford without much regret through this kind of reasoning and through the influence of John Nichol, Swinburne's close friend and the force behind the Old Mortality Society. He was also influenced by the works of Blake and Shelley. In Shelley's Queen Mab, God is "Himself the creature of His worshippers"; and in his Prometheus Unbound, Prometheus, the mind of mankind, proclaims, "I gave [Jupiter] / All he has."[70] Swinburne himself later quoted with approval Blake's conviction that "All deities reside in the human breast":

> The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes . . . .
>
> Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of and enslaved the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects. . . .
>
> And at length they pronounced that the Gods had ordered such things.
>
> Thus men forgot All deities reside in the human breast.[71]

In the "Hymn of Man" Swinburne suggests not only that God is maintained by tradition internalized as conscience but also that He is created by man's fear of the dark forces of nature. Ironically, however, He becomes a cruel and repressive tyrant and is even more greatly to be feared than Nature. God here and throughout the volume is much like Shelley's Jupiter or Blake's Urizen, whom Swinburne describes as follows:

> . . . Urizen, God of cloud and star, 'Father of jealousy,' clothed with a splendor of shadow, strong and sad and cruel; his

> planet faintly glimmers and slowly revolves, a horror in heaven; the night is a part of his thought; rain and wind are in the passage of his feet; sorrow is in all his works; . . . in his worship faith remains one with fear.[72]

Swinburne's God is the shadow over the history of man's spirit and is also allied with the tyranny of priests and kings, "creeds" and "crowns." As the lines "A creed is a rod/ And a crown is of night" (ll. 71-2,75) imply, when Swinburne urges man's rebellion against God he is also urging freedom from all tyrants and all oppressive institutions, religious or political, especially those which have kept man enslaved in a "1,874 year swindle."[73] As he says in "The Eve of Revolution":

Priest is the staff of king
And chains and clouds one thing,
And fettered flesh with devastated mind.
Open thy soul to see,
Slave, and thy feet are free;
Thy bonds and beliefs are one in kind,
And of thy fears thine irons wrought
Hang weights upon thee fashioned of thine own thought.[74]

To Swinburne freedom is imminent now that the God and the source of authority of priests and tyrants is dead. In "Hymn of Man" he presents this idea in an inversion of the Christian image of resurrection: God is forever entombed, "And the stone that is sealed on his grave he shall rise not and roll not away." His kingly "raiments" have also been stripped away:

He hath doffed his king's raiment of lies now the wane of his kingdom has come;
Ears hath he, and hears not; and eyes, and he sees not; and mouth, and is dumb.
His red king's raiment is ripped from him naked, his staff broken down;
And the signs of his empire are stripped from him shuddering; and where is his crown?[75]

In "Hertha" the death of God is presented in terms of the Teutonic myths of Igdrasil and Ragnarök. The Gods of man's "fashion" are seen first of all as "worms that are bred in the bark" of Hertha's tree (ll. 105,76), then as "Stars caught in [her] branches" (ll. 108,76) which are "worshipped as suns" (ll. 110,76) in the dark of man's days. Now, however, God's own

> twilight is come on him,
> His anguish is here;
> And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
> Grown grey from his fear;
> And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year. (ll. 180-185,79)

Like the tree Igdrasil, the twilight of the gods is described by Carlyle in "The Hero as Divinity":

> It is in the Völuspa Song; seemingly a very old, prophetic idea. The Gods and Jötuns, the divine Powers and the chaotic brute ones, after long contest and partial victory by the former, meet at last in universal world-embracing wrestle and duel; World-serpent against Thor.[76]

But Swinburne does something quite different with the opposition between the sky-gods (principally Odin and Thor) and the Jötuns, and with Ragnarök, (which is linked by Carlyle with the "phoenix fire-death" of Sartor Resartus and the birth of a "higher supreme God."[77]) Carlyle's Odin is a symbol or "emblem"[78] of the divine, much as nature is, but this heroic Captain of Heaven was made into a god by the primitive Teutonic mind. Swinburne would have allied this divinizing process with man's creation of the false God who tyrannizes over him. Indeed, the unnatural God of "Hertha" is much like Carlyle's Odin -- and his Thor. First of all, both Teutonic gods are seen as implacable sky-powers and fierce war-gods. Thor is the wrathful thunderer: "wrathful he 'blows his red beard,' -- that is the rustling stormblast before the thunder begin," suggests Carlyle.[79] Similarly, in "Hertha," "God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the wrath of the Lord" (ll. 170,78). Of course, this is common imagery which need not be seen as a reflection of Carlyle's; but it is also connected by

Swinburne with the "rustling" of the boughs of the Tree of Life which, as established earlier, both writers present as the "stormwind" of history. In Carlyle, "the stormwind howling through [the Tree of Life is] like the voice of all the gods";[80] so too are Swinburne's "stormwinds of ages" (ll. 121,77) and the "war-wind that rages" (ll. 123,77), but the voice is that of the God who has made man's history chaotic and dark.[81] The voice is also actually that of man, the creator -- and Carlyle's "rustling" is linked as well with "the breath of Human Passion."

Swinburne also appears to pick up Carlyle's remarks that Odin was a "light kindled" in that "obscure" time who "had to shine there, and make his obscure element a little lighter," and that his "huge shadow . . . still projects itself over the whole History of his People," both somewhat confusedly combined in the following statement: "like some enormous camera-obscura shadow thrown upwards from the dead deeps of the Past, and covering the whole Northern Heaven, is not Scandinavian Mythology in some sort the Portraiture of this man Odin?"[82] As suggested previously, Swinburne's tyrant God is seen as both "shadow" and "star":

> I that saw where ye trod
>   The dim paths of the night
> Set the shadow called God
>   In your skies to give light[.] (ll. 91-94,75)

Finally, as Wendell Stacy Johnson notes, Swinburne's frequent use of the word "raiment" is related to Carlyle's. Although the image is a common one -- and particularly important to Shelley, as we have seen -- Carlyle gave "a specifically social sense to the garments of time and . . . [viewed] both political and religious forms as proper if temporary clothes."[83] The image is, of course, central to Sartor

Resartus,[84] but it is also present in "The Hero as Divinity." To the primitive man, says Carlyle (man before he divinized Odin, Swinburne would add), "nature was not veiled under names and formulas; it stood naked, flashing-in on him there, beautiful, awful, unspeakable."[85] Swinburne uses the same imagery throughout Songs before Sunrise, altering its value. As Johnson maintains, Swinburne, unlike Carlyle, "prefers the naked freedom of nature to the clothed order of society"[86] and relates this order to political and religious oppression and to its source, the tyrant God. In "Mater Triumphalis" "Creeds woven of men" veil nature's truth; in "Hymn of Man" God wears a "raiment of lies";[87] and in "Hertha" itself God has "the fires of his thunders /For raiment and rod" (ll. 178-179,79).

That Swinburne may be deliberately altering Carlyle's imagery is perhaps indicated in his later poems on Carlyle, where all of these interrelated image patterns (principally clothing, storm, stars and night, but also thunder and fire, and the false word) are present.[88] In "On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot," Carlyle is presented as:

> The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
> Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might
> Of darkness and the magnificence of night[.]

In "Two Leaders," Swinburne says to Carlyle,

> Your world of Gods and kings of shrine and state,
>   Was of the night when hope and fear stood nigher,
>   Wherein men walked by light of stars and fire
> Till man by day stood equal with his fate.[89]

Swinburne was most vocal in protesting Carlyle's ultimate political position, his conception that man must be firmly guided from without and above. The protest began, as suggested in Chapter One, quite quietly with Of Liberty and Loyalty, in which Swinburne points out the essential difference between, on the one hand, "self-reliance" or liberty and, on the other hand, "the negative quality of non-resistance" or the obedience and duty advocated by Carlyle, and maintains that true loyalty is impossible without liberty.[90] It reached its highest pitch in Note of an English Republican, in which Swinburne proclaims that Carlyle, who has long been the "illustrious enemy" of "[l]iberty and justice, equality and equity, fraternity and mercy," would have been on the side of those who crucified Christ:

> No tetrarch or pro-consul, no Mouravieff or Eyre of them all, would have been swifter or louder to invoke the sentence of beneficent gallows, on the communist and stump-orator of Nazareth. . . . [W]hat a Latter-Day Pamphlet on the Crucifixion, what an Occasional Discourse on the Nazarene Question might we not now possess, whereby to lighten the darkness of history, and adjust the balance of judgment!

Swinburne refers here and throughout the essay to Carlyle's support of the atrocities committed by Governor Eyre in Jamaica, and he contrasts Carlyle with Mill, who opposed Eyre and is "the best and wisest among English philosophers and statesmen."[91] It should also be mentioned here that Mill's On Liberty, as Swinburne said in a letter, was the "text-book of [his] creed as to public morals and political faith."[92] Like Mill, Swinburne opposed not only Carlyle's politics but also the philosophy which he considered to control it[93] -- as "Two Leaders" indicates. Carlyle was on the side of the "Heavenly Luminaries,"[94] whatever his political sympathies appeared to be when he wrote Sartor Resartus. Swinburne, it is my contention, deliberately picked Hertha to be his Great Goddess in order to show that he was on the opposite side in the battle, with the followers of Hertha. To return to "The Hero as Divinity," Hertha and the Jötuns were for Swinburne in the process of winning the "world-embracing wrestle and duel."[95] The Jötuns were not the "chaotic brute"[96] forces they were for Carlyle but Promethean rebels and Christ-figures battling against the oppressive sky-powers.

The mother goddess of "Hertha" is the opposite of the male principle of domination. She is the very essence of freedom, requiring no devotion and giving no direction. As she says to man,

> I bid you but be;
>   I have need not of prayer;
> I have need of you free
>   As your mouths of mine air;
> That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me
> fair. (ll. 156-160,78)[97]

The poem specifically links Hertha with man's recovery of "the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives" (ll. 190,79). The Goddess of Liberty is, of course, a commonplace in poetry; but the symbol is particularly important and natural in Swinburne's poetry, as it is connected with his primary female principle, who is unguided from above and works freely from within. Swinburne establishes this link in the letter which he composed with William Michael Rossetti in 1869 to send to Ricciardi's Congress of Freethinkers, which was formed in opposition to the Oecumenical Council of Rome, particularly to its adoption of the dogmas of infallibility and its condemnation of liberal doctrines:

> Ideal and actual, the Church of priests, and the Republic, are natural and internecine enemies. Freedom, which comes by the law of the life of man -- flame of his spirit, root and heart and blood and muscle of his manhood -- can take no truce with the creeds or miscreeds which inflict . . . the hideous and twofold penalty of blindness and eviration. She expects no non-natural message from above or from without; but only that which comes from within -- faith, born of man, in man, which passes in contagious revelation from spirit again to spirit; without authority and without sign . . . .[98]

It is interesting to note in this context that only a few years earlier J.J. Bachofen had made the same connection between the Great Goddess and liberty in his Mutterrecht und Urreligion (1866). In this seminal study, Bachofen not only presents the idea that original worship was of the Great Goddess and society was matriarchal, solar religion and patriarchal society being later developments,[99] but also links the Great Goddess with freedom:

> Whereas the paternal principle is inherently restrictive, the maternal principle is universal; the paternal principle implies limitation to definite groups, but the maternal principle, like the life of nature, knows no barriers. The idea of motherhood produces a sense of universal fraternity which knows no barriers. . . . It is the basis of universal freedom and equality . . . .[100]

Erich Fromm summarizes Bachofen's ideas: the matriarchal system involves a respect for human life and freedom and equality, while the patriarchal system "considers obedience to authority to be the main virtue" and involves "the concept of the favorite son and a hierarchical order in society."[101] It is unlikely that Swinburne read Bachofen, but he could have been familiar (perhaps through Bendyshe) with the similar theories put forward by L.H. Morgan in America, or with the application of Bachofen's ideas in John F. McLennan's Primitive Marriage.[102]

In the political poems of Songs before Sunrise, Hertha and the Goddess of Freedom are often seen as one. In "The Eve of Revolution," the first poem in the volume, "the natural force in spirit and sense, that art /One thing in all things" is called upon with the Goddesses of Revolution and Liberty; in "Tenebrae," Liberty is called the "sole mother and maker"; and in "To Walt Whitman in America," there is "one name for freedom and man" and it is "The cause, the center, the mind, /The secret and sense of the earth."[103] As these last lines indicate, the spirit of man is essentially one with that of earth and freedom. The identification is enhanced by the following lines in which Freedom herself is seen as a Christ figure:

Brotherhood of good,
  Equal laws and rights,
Freedom, whose sweet food
Feeds the multitude
  All their days and nights.

With the bread full-fed
  Of her body blest
And the soul's wine shed
From her table spread
  Where the world is guest.[104]

However, in other lines Swinburne draws a distinction between this intrinsic connection and the link which man himself has chosen to forge with the man-made tyrannical Godhead. In this context, Swinburne sometimes presents the alternate image of the "sun-god Freedom"[105] who is only about to be reborn and begin his work. He is the true male principle, the soul of man and the son of Hertha, and may be distinguished from the false male Gods whom he replaces. In "To Walt Whitman in America," the two ideas -- one of essential identification and the other of the process of actualizing it -- are drawn together: even though the god of Freedom seems to be crucified,

in the weariest of years and obscurest
   Doth it live not at the heart of things,
The one God and one spirit, a purest
   Life, fed from unquenchable springs?
Within love, within hatred it is,
And its seed in the stripe as the kiss,
   And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.[106]

Similarly, in the paired poems "Mater Dolorosa" and "Mater Triumphalis" we have images of the "golden goddess" of freedom neglected and then recovered by man. In the first poem, republican freedom has been cast aside by man and sits

> by the wild wayside,
> In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a cast-off bride,
> In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with soiled feet bare,
> With the night for a garment upon her, with torn wet hair[.][107]

In "Mater Triumphalis" the "mother of time-travelling generations, /Breath of his nostrils, heartblood of his heart" is herself reborn in the recovered vision of man:

> And the world stands naked as a new-born maiden
> Stands virginal and splendid as at birth,
> With all thine heaven of all its light unladen
> Of all its love unburdened all thine earth.[108]

The patterns of imagery associated with Swinburne's anticipation of the recovery of the spirit of Hertha are usually simple reversals of the patterns pertaining to the patriarchal principle. We have, first of all, as in the lines above, the vision of unveiled, naked nature, which recalls that presented by Carlyle in "The Hero as Divinity" and by Swinburne in the opening lines of the "Hymn of Man." Involved here, too, is the anticipation of the return of the spring and the "blossoming" of man presented in "Hertha" and the idea that the mother is to become man's bride.[109] The second pattern of imagery is that which is invoked in the title of the volume, the return of dawn after night. Swinburne speaks first of all of the need of the individual to recognize that the true light is that within,[110] and then of the eventual freeing of the sun-god Freedom, the collective soul of man,[111] and the actualizing of Hertha's golden promise. This is also the "word" of heaven -- "Let there be light."[112] Associated here, as well, is the image of Freedom or man awakening after centuries of sleep, an idea which Swinburne notes in his study of Blake's poetry.[113] More prevalent, however, is the less passive image of the unchaining of Prometheus or the resurrection of Christ, a process also discussed in William

Blake.[114]

This third, and perhaps most central, image pattern predominates in those poems dedicated to the daughters of Hertha, the goddesses who symbolize the spirit of freedom in individual countries, particularly in those poems dedicated to the spirit of Italy. Swinburne's hopes were focused at this time on the cause of republican freedom in Italy as it was advanced by Mazzini and his followers. Throughout Songs before Sunrise the influence of Mazzini, whom Swinburne met personally in 1867, may be seen. Even in "Hertha" it is present in the allusion to the colours of the flag of free and united Italy: "Green leaves of thy labour, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death" (ll. 80,75).[115] It is also interesting to note that Mazzini uses much the same imagery to describe the battle in which he was engaged and to urge Swinburne to join it. Before their interview, Mazzini sent Swinburne a letter, belatedly thanking him for sending a copy of Atalanta and urging him to use his poetry to "rouse the sleeping":

> Whilst the immense heroic Titanic battle is fought, christened on every spot by the tears of the loving ones and blood of the brave, between Right and Wrong, Freedom and Tyranny, Truth and Lie, God and the Devil -- with a new conception of Life, a new Religious Synthesis, a new European world struggling to emerge from the graves of Rome, Athens, Byzantium and Warsaw -- the poet ought to be the apostle of a crusade . . . .[116]

In "A Song of Italy," which Swinburne recited to Mazzini at their first interview (and later collected in Songs of Two Nations), Freedom addresses her child Italy, assuring her that even though she has been rent by "fouler eagles" than was Prometheus she has not been forgotten.[117] And in "The Litany of Nations" Italy replies to the Great Mother, affirming that twice before, "once by sword and once by word imperial," she has "burst thy tomb" and will rise once more.[118] In

"Super Flumina Babylonis" Swinburne envisions this resurrection:

> By the stone of the sepulchre we returned to weep,
> From far, from prison;
> And the guards by it keeping it we beheld asleep,
> But thou was risen.

An "angelical" voice speaks to the watchers:

> 'Lo, the graveclothes of Italy that are folded up
> In the grave's gloom!
> And the guards as men wrought upon with charmèd cup,
> By the open tomb.
>
> 'And her body most beautiful, and her shining head,
> These are not here;
> For your mother, for Italy, is not surely dead:
> Have ye no fear.[119]

His hopes for the resurrection of this Goddess were, however, a bit premature -- or a bit late. Italy was not to become a Republic until after the Second World War, and by the time Swinburne met Mazzini the fight which the old exile had begun in the early 1830's was quite lost. Italy (with the exclusion of Rome) was already in the process of unifying under the direction of Victor Emmanuel and the house of Piedmont. Swinburne at least partially acknowledges defeat in the "Mentana" poems and in "The Halt before Rome -- September 1867," written on the occasion of Garibaldi's unsuccessful attempt to liberate Rome from the control of Pius IX and Napoleon III. Here he recalls his earlier proclamation, "Italia was risen."

> So spake we aloud, high-minded
> Full of our will; and behold,
> The speech that was halfway spoken
> Breaks . . . .[120]

France and England also figure prominently in *Songs before Sunrise*. In "Quia Multum Amavit" France is pictured as a "harlot," first of all for betraying her own Republican principles and then for her part in betraying Italy:

As a harlot thou wast handled and polluted,
  Thy faith held light as foam,
That thou sentest men thy sons, thy sons imbruted
  To slay thine elder Rome.
Therefore, O harlot, I gave thee to the accurst one,
  By night to be defiled,
To thy second shame, and a fouler than the first one,
  That got thee first with child.[121]

England is seen more as a comfortable and complacent matron who has forgotten the work of such sons as Milton, Shelley and Landor[122] and is content with having "filed the teeth of the snake /Monarchy."[123] She also refuses to look beyond her own domestic concerns and support the cause of freedom elsewhere.

Greece is present in the volume, as well, and is depicted as the first light of Hertha and a guiding star for man.[124] But it is in Erechtheus (1876) that Swinburne establishes Greece, particularly Athens, as the alternative to the direction given by Christianity. As he says in a letter (again to William Michael Rossetti), even though he was anxious to keep his verse and his vision purely Greek, he wanted to "infuse throughout a broader undertone of general and world-wide interest based on the immortality of Greece as the everlasting and immortal mother-country of thought and art and action, the exemplar to all times and nations for all patriots and poets." He continues: "One of these days I must write a paper on Athens and Jerusalem as the two rival fountains of light and darkness, liberty and servitude for the human race . . . ."[125] Swinburne does keep his drama quite free from the intrusion of "modern morals and feelings," which he earlier remarked had marred both Goethe's and Shelley's Greek dramas;[126] however, he does present the same battle that is depicted in Songs before Sunrise -- the battle, as Murfin puts it, between "subservience to the gods" and "a revolutionary declaration of [man's] own divinity."[127] Chthonia's willingness to sacrifice herself for Athens ensures the victory of man over the tyrannical gods. She is the "saviour" whose "blood," spilt on Mother Earth, becomes the "wine" which makes "the world's heart warm,/That all eyes seeing may lighten, and all ears /Hear and be kindled."[128]

In the drama, the forces of light are Earth, Athena, and Erechtheus and his armies, and the forces of darkness are the Sea, Poseidon, and Eumolpus and his invading armies. Indeed, the realms of the natural, the divine, and the human seem to be so intermingled that the action on the narrative level is sometimes difficult to follow. Rutland, for one, complains that it is almost impossible to decide whether the enemy of Athens is the Thracian army or the sea itself.[129]

This fusion is particularly true of the forces of light: here, as in Songs before Sunrise, man and god and earth are one once man realizes nature's freedom. Although Athena may seem an unusual goddess to symbolize this conception, as she is usually depicted as springing from the head of Zeus himself, in Swinburne's work she represents man's achievement of the maternal principle of freedom.[130] As Murfin notes in his suggestive interpretation of Erechtheus, when Athena appears at the end of the play the same imagery is used to describe her as has been consistently associated with Chthonia, the individual soul who accepts freedom.[131] And in her speech Athena says that the men who fought in the battle are one with her divinity:

> with me
> Shall these be worshipped as one God, and mix
> With mine the might of their mysterious names
> In one same shrine served singly, thence to keep
> Perpetual guard on Athens[.][132]

Jerome McGann also quotes these lines, adding the observation that "Pallas is no longer an Olympian, but a Republican goddess. She is to her Athenians what Hertha is to man in general."[133]

Distinctions can, however, be made among the levels of the opposing forces. Poseidon can be considered representative of those "strange gods"[134] who seek man's submission, and his son and his armies as those forces who work in His name.[135] These forces may be vanquished, but the sea itself remains as one of the actualities of existence with which man must learn to reconcile himself. In Songs before Sunrise, the "divine contraries of life" include death as well as life, night as well as day.[136] Correspondingly, in Erechtheus, Death, Chthonia's Bridegroom, is seen both as the "third wave" of the sea and an aspect of the chthonian forces of earth.[137] As Murfin concludes,

> Erechtheus suggests that in the moment of its Chthonian (or Promethean) realization of freedom and responsibility through wisdom, mankind comes into possession of that ideal agnostic state which automatically declares all gods to be dead; which automatically places the responsibilities for cruelties such as war (symbolized in the play by Eumolpus' battle with Erechtheus for Athens) directly in the hands of men; which implicitly reconciles a human society ruled only by ethical responsibilities with the godless, amoral cycles of Nature and the cosmos.[138]

Sea and night, then, remain. They symbolize, particularly at the end of the play, the continual contraries of life (as well as fate, change, and the course of time which in "Hertha" will bring the end of the false God). The imagery is used by Athena in her final pronouncement in the play:

> time nor earth nor changing sons of man
> Nor waves of generations, nor the winds
> Of ages risen and fallen that steer their tides
> Through light and dark of birth and lovelier death
> From storm to haven inviolable, shall see
> So great a light alive beneath the sun
> As the aweless eye of Athens[.]

The final words of the Chorus echo her words. Those generations to follow will look to Athens for inspiration and guidance:

> In the darkness of change on the waters of time they shall turn from afar
> To the beam of this dawn for a beacon, the light on these pyres for a star.[139]

This imagery is in keeping with both the description earlier in the play of Chthonia as a star in darkness and the description of the lights of Greece in the earlier poem "The Eve of Revolution" of Songs before Sunrise as "stars or beacons" for man.[140] It contrasts with the imagery in "Hertha" which suggests that man has erroneously "Set the shadow called God / In [his] skies to give light" (ll. 93-94, 75). Greece is, then, the alternative inspiration to the "darkness" of Jerusalem.

The continuation of the forces of night in Erechtheus, not only as part of the actual history of man's spirit but also as part of the processes of nature, is also seen in Songs before Sunrise. Even though Hertha is linked with love and freedom, the volume is less optimistic than some commentators have supposed. As we have seen in Chapter One, Swinburne criticized the Victorians, particularly Tennyson, for their optimism; as his letter to William Michael Rossetti indicates, he was troubled that his "Hertha" might also incur "the (to me) most hateful charge of optimism, a creed which I despise as much as ever did Voltaire." He worked hard over "Hertha" to

> perfect[ ] the verses necessary to bring out the root or master-thought, and to combine and harmonize the connecting links of the idea: which needed to be done with all distinctness and delicacy at once, as it was not at first evident why the principle of growth, whence and by which all evil not less than all good proceeds and acts, should prefer liberty to bondage, Mazzini to Buonaparte, . . . Christ to de Sade . . . .

This, he continues, "of course is the problem in all our speculation, and here was the problem to solve in expression, the difficulty to resolve in words." He suggests to William Michael that he had solved the problem in the verse beginning, "I bid you but be" (ll. 156-160,78, quoted in full above) and that "while expiating on her universality and the immeasurable equanimity of time and matter and their forces" he had made the "All-Mother a good Republican."[141] This is a difficult and crucial point in Swinburne's thought. We have already suggested that Hertha is linked with freedom because she herself works freely from within and is not controlled from above, and because, in his own sphere, man may direct the energies within. If he thinks that he is controlled from without, by the false God of his own creation, he is violating the very principles of life. In his article on Swinburne's "problem to solve in expression," Ridenour adds that Hertha (like Blake's tiger) is all-inclusive, containing both good and evil.[142] Swinburne insists that Nature is amoral, neither a benevolent nor a malevolent goddess. Buonaparte, then, violates the very principles of life, and de Sade's vision of life is a limited one.

The fact that this All-Mother contains all contraries -- death and life, good and evil, pleasure and pain -- is emphasized throughout "Hertha" and Songs before Sunrise as a whole. That the voice of Earth is "hoarse and hollow and shrill with strife"[143] is particularly insisted upon in "Genesis" and "Hymn of Man." In the first poem, after putting forward the myth of creation by which "[a]ll similitudes began," Swinburne continues: "And death, shadow cast by life's wide wings /And God, shade cast by the soul of man."[144] Here we have the two aspects of the symbol of darkness and night which were employed in

Erechtheus, and an indication of the difference. Swinburne first presents the process of growth,

> The immortal war of mortal things, that is
> Labour and life and growth and good and ill,
> The mild antiphonies that melt and kiss,
> The violent symphonies that meet and kill,

by which "All nature of all things began to be."[145] He then confirms the unity of death and life and the necessity of death to life and growth:

> For the great labour of growth, being many, is one;
> One thing the white death and the ruddy birth;
> The invisible air and the all-beholden sun,
> And barren water and many-childed earth.

And:

> For if death were not, then should growth not be,
> Change, nor the life of good nor evil things;
> Nor were there night at all nor light to see,
> Nor water of sweet nor water of bitter springs.[146]

He then suggests that the seeds of these opposites, "The white seed of the fruitful helpful morn, /The black seed of the barren hurtful hours," are both contained in man, but that man has deified the black seed (this suggestion recalling the earlier line on the "shadow" of God). However, he sees an end to this process: although the man who chooses the black seed at first eats "sweet fruit," men will eventually "loathe and make his name a rod"; but the man of the white seed, who is at first rewarded with the "unsweet fruit," men will "follow and know for very God."[147] The poem then returns to the original idea that the contraries of black and white in terms of growth and the processes of nature will still exist:

> And of these twain, the black seed and the white,
> All things come forth, endured of men and done:
> And still the day is great with child of night
> And still the black night labours with the sun.[148]

Similarly, in "Hymn of Man" we have both an indication of the "rhythmic anguish of growth and motion of mutable things"[149] and of man's struggle not only with "the God of his own creation" but also with "'things' -- the opposing forces of life and nature," as Swinburne himself expressed it in a letter.[150] As we have seen earlier, the poem indicates that the false God has been created by man himself: "Yea, himself too hath made himself chains, and his own hands plucked out his eyes[.]" The word "too" refers to the fact that the true God, man, is also "fast-bound as with iron of adverse things" and swims "blind" in the "sea whereof centuries are waves."[151] Men are

> Storm-worn, since being began, with the wind and thunder of things.
> Things are cruel and blind; their strength detains and deforms:
> And the wearying wings of the mind still beat up the stream of their storms.
> Still, as one swimming up stream, they strike out blind in the blast,
> In thunders of vision and dream, and lightnings of future and past.
> We are baffled and caught in the current and bruised upon edges of shoals;
> As weeds or as reeds in the torrent of things are the wind-shaken souls.[152]

The solution to the battle with the false God is clear and straightforward as compared to the solution to the battle with "things." In this poem Swinburne seems to suggest that the struggle with the forces of life is continual, that man's search to avoid or minimize this struggle has led to the greater darkness of God, and that through the denial of this God, man will realize that he is his own light and the only light of nature. Man can thus control his own destiny within the sphere of the inevitable working of "things" which is also freedom.[153]

This interpretation of the implications of the "Hymn of Man" is in keeping with what Murfin suggested of Erechtheus and with the more straightforward ideas of the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise. In the "Prelude," Swinburne presents the man who "[treads] to dust" the "[f]ear and desire" which bind him to the false God and takes on instead the "[k]nowledge and patience of what must /And what things may be":

> Him can no God cast down, whom none
>   Can lift in hope beyond the height
> Of fate and nature and things done
>   By the calm rule of might and right
> That bids men be and bear and do,
>   And die beneath blind skies or blue.[154]

This man, he continues, echoing the criticism which he made of some of the Victorian poets, "builds not half of doubt and half/ Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph." In the following verses, it may be added, Swinburne seems to oppose specifically the unnecessary despair at the universe and man's place in it which he associated with Arnold's Empedocles, and the false hope that man may be guided from above on his journey which he saw in Tennyson. The verses also provide the same answer as does the "Hymn of Man":

> Because man's soul is man's God still,
> What wind soever waft his will
>   Across the waves of day and night
>   To port or shipwreck, left or right,
> By shores and shoals of good and ill;
>   And still its flame at mainmast height
> Through the rent air the foam-flakes fill
>   Sustains the indomitable light
> Whence only man hath strength to steer
> Or helm to handle without fear.
>
> Save his own soul's light overhead,
> None leads him, and none ever led,
>   Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
>   Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
> Through age that drives on toward the red
>   Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
> To the equal waters of the dead;
>   Save his own soul he hath no star,
> And sinks, except his own soul guide,
> Helmless in middle turn of tide.[155]

The same ideas are also part of "Hertha" itself, which is written in a variation of the metre of Empedocles' monologue on "self-reliance, self-dependence, self-respect," as Swinburne called it. Hertha contains all contraries: "These too [deathworms and lightnings] have their part in me /As I too in these" (ll. 141-142,77). She endures the continuous and "great labour of growth": "sore be my burden /And more than ye know" (ll. 136-137,77). And she neither has nor gives direction: "my growth have no guerdon /But only to grow" (ll. 138-139,77; see also the lines which Swinburne saw as the solution to the problem of optimism, beginning "I bid you but be"). Swinburne, then, does include the darker aspects of nature in his conception of Hertha.

It is not difficult to see why he also read Blake's conception of Nature as a welcome relief from the direct benevolence attributed to her by other thinkers. When attempting to comprehend this aspect of Blake's thought, he also notes that Blake's statements on Nature remind him of de Sade's. He paraphrases the "modern pagan philosopher of more material tendencies":

> Nature averse to crime? I tell you, nature lives and breathes by it; hungers at all her pores for bloodshed, aches in all her nerves for the help of sin, yearns with all her heart for the furtherance of cruelty. Nature forbid that thing or this? Nay, the best or worst of you will never go so far as she would have you; no criminal will come up to the measure of her crimes, no destruction seem to her destructive enough. . . . [F]or Nature would fain have it so, that she might create a world of new things; for she is weary for ancient life: her eyes are sick of seeing and her ears are heavy with hearing; with the lust of creation she is burnt up, and rent in twain with travail until she bring forth change; she would fain create afresh, and cannot, except it be by destroying: in all her energies she is athirst for mortal food, and with all her forces she labours in desire of death.[156]

As will be shown in Chapter Three, Swinburne had already understood why de Sade stresses the evil and destructive side of nature; but here he still suggests that de Sade's words are "not so wholly insignificant" because they do point to an aspect of nature which the optimists ignored.

There is certainly a suggestion in the lines mentioned previously from "Hertha" and from "Genesis" and "Hymn of Man" of Schopenhauer's conception of the underlying principle of reality as unconscious, irrational "blind will." Those critics who have noted Swinburne's connection with the "Buddhistic pantheism"[157] of Schopenhauer and Wagner are, in general, quite correct. Although Schopenhauer was not well known in England when he was writing "Hertha,"[158] Swinburne claims in a letter of 1869 to have known of him "years ago." When writing to his friend George Powell to thank him for sending a copy of Auguste de Gasperini's La Nouvelle Allemagne Musicale: Richard Wagner (1866), Swinburne adds that he is

> much struck by finding in Wagner a disciple in matters of thought of A. Schopenhauer. I read some extracts from his work and a condensed summary of his life and views given in a review of Fouché de Careil's book on the subject . . . now years ago, which impressed me unforgettably with their beautiful force, clearness, and fearless depth of truth.[159]

Swinburne was also part of the first vogue of Wagner in England. As Sypher notes, Swinburne's knowledge of Wagner may go back as far as Gautier's account of Tannhäuser in 1857; he certainly was acquainted with Wagner's works by 1863, when he received from Baudelaire a copy of his Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris (1861).[160] Swinburne also seems to have followed the fierce debate over Wagner in such French journals as the Revue des Deux Mondes and the Journal des Débats, and, indeed, mentions Edward Scharé's "Le Drame musicale et l'oeuvre de M. Richard Wagner" of Les Deux Mondes (April, 1869) in one of his letters to George Powell, expressing his amazement that a "careful and appreciative" article on Wagner had appeared in the review and anticipating that Wagner would be thoroughly abused in their next number.[161] Swinburne's friendship with George Powell and with Franz Hüffer, who were both enthusiastic Wagnerites, would have encouraged his interest in Wagner.[162] Hüffer, it may be added, was also interested in Schopenhauer and may even have written a translation of him. Pointing out in a note to the Swinburne Letters that Chatto and Windus had advertised this translation as "in preparation from 1874 to 1876," Lang indicates that it does not seem to have been published. Swinburne himself, at the request of Brown, wrote to Chatto in 1874 that Hüffer was the "fittest man to introduce to English students the great thinker and man in person, whose fame has [now] excited such deep interest and attention in England as well as France."[163]

Schopenhauer is linked with Darwin in one of the earliest English considerations of him,[164] and it may be added that the conception of nature which Swinburne put forth in "Hertha" has also been linked with Darwin by the critics. In a poet supposedly ignorant of contemporary scientific developments, Tillyard, for instance, finds an allusion not only to the theory of the "conservation of energy and indestructability of matter" (ll. 4,72 -- "equal and whole") but also to the ideas of the origin of species in "contemporary theories of evolution" (ll. 11-12,72 -- "First life on my sources /First drifted and swam").[165] Georg Roppen continues from Tillyard: the next lines of the poem refer to the idea of natural selection (ll. 13-15,72 -- "Out of me are the forces /That save it or damn"), and in the lines expressing the "idea that 'blossoms increase' due to the storm and struggle of existence there [also] appears to be an impact of Darwin's survival principle and Spenser's key phrase" (ll. 120-125, 77, beginning "The storm-winds of ages" and quoted in full above).[166] Although their interpretations of individual lines might be disputed, it may definitely be affirmed that Swinburne was enthusiastic about the "advance of science in this half-century," that he suggested that the new science was an antidote to the "religious pestilence," and that after reading Tyndall's famous address he contrasted the views of science to the "doubt, discord and disorder" caused by theism.[167] In this last statement Swinburne expresses once more his willingness to face the stern actualities of nature and thereby to be free to achieve wholeness of vision. This willingness is not based on an optimistic view of nature but on a pessimistic view of the results of the dualism of theistic thinking, which is based on fear and the false hope of unity elsewhere, above and beyond life.

Swinburne probably considered Schopenhauer to be "fearless" and "heroic"[168] because he too faced actualities. First of all, he objected strenuously to the return of Kant's successors to "transcendent metaphysics"; secondly, he presented an unPlotinized view of the world and nature; and, finally, he considered nature to achieve self-consciousness in man, her "crown." Swinburne does not, however, follow Schopenhauer in his Buddhistic (and logically troublesome) concept of man's "denial of the will" through art (the pure contemplation of idea) or through asceticism. This denial is, as Zuckerman establishes, what Wagner found to be the essence of Schopenhauer and what he followed in his Tristran und Isolde: "The final negation of the desire to live," Wagner said, "is Schopenhauer's chief idea" and is "the only salvation possible."[169] It is also what Nietzsche ultimately objected to in both men. Even though Schopenhauer was one of his masters, Nietzsche soon distinguished between his own "tragic world view" and Schopenhauer's "pessimism," which he interpreted as a passive resignation or a desire to escape suffering rather than a Dionysian acceptance of the contraries of life.[170] Similarly, Nietzsche criticized the impulse of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde as "life-denying," a surrendering to "suicidal drowning" rather than an "overcoming."[171]

In Swinburne's poetry there is no desire to deny life but a consistent celebration of man's amorous struggle with the mother and lover as he reconciles himself with actualities. In "Mater Triumphalis" Swinburne speaks to the Great Goddess in his own voice and of his own song:

> I am thine harp between thine hands, O mother!
>   All my strong chords are strained with love of thee.
> We grapple in love and wrestle, as each with other
>   Wrestle the wind and the unreluctant sea.
>
> I am no courtier of thee sober-suited
>   Who loves a little for a little pay.
> Me not thy winds and storms nor thrones disrooted
>   Nor molten crowns nor thine own sins dismay.[172]

In her role as beloved (that with which man must reunite in spirit) Hertha is most often seen as the sea — an apt symbol, as we have seen, of the continual flux and contrareity of things and the essential "unity in multëity" -- and man as the swimmer — an apt symbol, as well, of union as joyous love allied with a more painful striving. We have already seen this symbol-complex in "Hymn of Man" (and a variation of it in the "Prelude"); it is also present in the "Epilogue." Here we have the figure of

> one that ere a June day rise
> Makes seaward for the dawn, and tries
>   The water with delighted limbs
>   That taste the sweet dark sea, and swims

Right eastward under strengthening skies,
And sees the gradual rippling rims
Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
Take fire ere light peer well above,
And laughs from all his heart with love[.]

This man directs toward the "sun for mark" those "[w]ho steer not for the stress of waves, /And seek strange helmsmen, and are slaves."[173] The symbolism is once again mixed with the political aspirations of the volume, and the man is Mazzini. In "To Walt Whitman in America," moreover, the nations are themselves swimmers: "Naked nations and bare /Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn."[174] In other poems the sunlight is seen not as the free spirit of man but as the actualities of nature which man turns to with some fear after dwelling in the seemingly protective night of Christianity:

Reared between night and noon and truth and error
Each twilight-travelling bird that trills and screams
Sickens at midday, nor can face for terror
The imperious heaven's inevitable extremes.[175]

In "On the Downs," another pattern which is important to Swinburne's poetry as a whole is established: the individual man stands on the "cliff-side" looking over the wasteland of the shore and the darkness of the sea and feeling despair until he hears and comprehends "the wise word of the secret earth" -- "There is no God, O son, /If thou be none!"[176]

As we will see in Chapter Four, this moment of unification is the subject of many of Swinburne's best poems in volumes subsequent to Songs before Sunrise and is presented in variations of the same image patterns as here -- the dive into the sea, the fearless facing of the heat of the sun, and the comprehension of the word of earth. The moment is, as will be shown in Chapter Three, quite different from the "drowning" desire explored in the Proserpine poems of the earlier

Poems and Ballads. It is not a longing for death, but an acceptance of fate and the natural contraries of life and death and -- as in Erechtheus and many of the political poems of Songs before Sunrise -- an acceptance of death if it is necessary rather than defeat by the gods and their earthly agents.[177] If sacrifice is necessary, then a man may joyfully accept death, be "reabsorbed into the immeasurable harmony," and become "part of the earth and the ancient sea" and a light for other men to follow.[178] This same difference between denial and acceptance is presented in a non-political context in Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse," which will be examined in Chapter Five. Here the difference between Swinburne and Wagner (and Schopenhauer) is quite apparent.

Swinburne's "yes" to life is very much like Nietzsche's. Swinburne's Dionysian vision is also

> an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life . . .; the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary union of creation and destruction . . . .[179]

There is no possibility, of course, that Swinburne could have known Nietzsche when he was composing Songs before Sunrise and no direct evidence that he knew him later.[180] It is interesting to note, however, that some of the first Nietzsche enthusiasts in England were friends of Swinburne or admirers of his poetry. Thatcher indicates that the earliest allusions to Nietzsche in England are in Hüffer's Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future (1874) and E. Dannreuther's Richard Wagner: His Tendencies and Theories (1873), and Swinburne was acquainted with both of these critics;[181] he was also acquainted with Havelock Ellis, who was one of the first English critics to comment in detail on Nietzsche.[182] John Payne (who read Nietzsche in German), John Davidson, and Gabriel D'Annunzio were influenced by both Nietzsche and Swinburne.[183]

A few critics of Swinburne have mentioned that he can be compared to Nietzsche in several respects, and, indeed, the similarities are sometimes striking.[184] First of all, both oppose a transcendent principle and point out the discord involved in such a dualistic view.[185] They also oppose the optimism of the "Christian theistic view of history as the steady advance of mankind toward a far-off divine event," as well as that of the "Hegelian belief in the progressive moment of history" and the "Darwinian proponents of evolutionary progress."[186] Both consider such optimism to be "symptoms of declining strength" and to be "motivated by fear of uncertainties and contradictions. Here the 'herdman' fears struggle and pain and invents deceptions and illusions."[187] Secondly, both avoid pessimistic renunciation, even though they ground their philosophy in an uncompromising view of nature. Thirdly, both vehemently oppose the death-like darkness of Christian ideals and morals, and both anticipate the "twilight of the Idols" and man's emancipation from this "slave morality."[188] Indeed, freedom from this oppression is presented by Nietzsche in much the same imagery that Swinburne uses:

> The most important of more recent events -- that "God is dead," that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief -- already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe. . . . [We find the effects] not at all sad or depressing, but rather like a new and indescribable variety of light, happiness, relief, enlivenment, encouragement, and dawning day. . . . In fact, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel ourselves irradiated as by a new dawn by the report that the "old God is dead"; our hearts overflow with gratitude, astonishment, presentiment, and expectation. At last the horizon seems open once more, granting even that it is not bright; our ships can at last put out to sea in face of

> every danger; every hazard is again permitted to the discerner; the sea, our sea, again lies open before us; perhaps never before did such an "open sea" exist.[189]

Finally, both thinkers set up the "Image of Man" as the new God; the new divinity is "life and the greatness of man."[190] As Pfeffer claims, "Nietzsche's ethic celebrates the heroic will of the individual who erects upon the altar of the dead transcendent God, the new divinity, man, and becomes the prophet of a 'new meaning of earth.'"[191]

Nietzsche and Swinburne generally part company on political matters. Not all are equal to the task of "overcoming" according to Nietzsche, and the "siren" democracy is but another instance of the tyranny of slave morality.[192] Swinburne is at his most optimistic in his political views, in his vision of the recovery of freedom for all men. But here it should be noted, as does McGann, that Swinburne definitely does not see this process in quite the same fashion, for instance, as the Hegelians or as those who take Darwinian evolution into the realms of the inevitable perfection of man's spirit. McGann notes that Swinburne opposed "perfectibilian ideas":

> Songs before Sunrise, though it constantly praises and forecasts the birth of what Swinburne liked to call, after Blake, "the divine humanity," does not assert an evolutionary idea. It does assert the inevitability of change, historical recurrences, and the coming of the dawn of man. But it never suggests that history saw no such dawning before -- quite the contrary, in fact -- or that the reality of night would henceforth be annihilated. These things he called "the divine contraries of life" ("Genesis"). Without them existence was inconceivable to his mind.[193]

We need but recall that the light of Greece had gone out (except as an inspiration to future men) to confirm that Swinburne did not view man's history as an inevitable progression. As Nietzsche suggests, "a few things succeed, scattered throughout all ages."[194] A new light seemed to be in the offing now that the supreme authority of God was waning, but, it must be noticed, has not as yet been achieved. Swinburne ends the volume, as we have seen, with the image of the individual man "striking out" for the dawn. The image of the swimmer in the embrace of the sea or the collective swim of nations is more immediate in Swinburne than the Shelleyan symbol of the golden paradise reached after the arduous journey.

There _are_ ambiguities in _Songs before Sunrise_ -- ones which are perhaps exacerbated by Swinburne's use of "night" and "light" as symbols of earth's continual contraries and of the moment of the death of God and the approaching freedom of man. Some of the ambiguities may, however, be cleared up by examining the statements which Swinburne himself made of those men who are usually considered to have influenced his views, especially his political ones. Indeed, to a certain point they did influence him considerably, but Swinburne is careful to dissociate himself from any type of false optimism he finds in their thinking. Mazzini is the best example. Some critics have considered the volume to be pure Mazzini, yet there is a significant difference in the general philosophy which controls Mazzini's political views. Even the letter which he sent to Swinburne to enrol him in the cause indicates this difference. Here Mazzini delineates the battle as between "God and the Devil," hopes for "a new Religious Synthesis," and notes that until man's "Duty" is fulfilled, "belief in God [is] a Lie."[195] For Mazzini, as W. Brooks Drayton Henderson points out, God is the "crown of the system" and "Humanity" is the "Prophet or Interpreter of God"; for Swinburne, as we have seen, God is the great "Lie" and man is the true God. Mazzini's ideas are thus "converted from the deistic service to which he puts [them], to the service and expression of . . . Pantheism."[196] Swinburne wished, as he said to William Michael, "to atheize the republicans and republicanize the atheists of my acquaintance" and wrote "Hymn of Man" for that purpose.[197] Perhaps Mazzini was one of those acquaintances, for much later he wrote that "Victor Hugo was so passionate and fervent a believer in a future life and a judgement to come that many good men who could not share his conviction regarded him, even to the last, as a fanatic or religious dreamer," and added that "Mazzini was so deeply and intensely possessed by the same faith that the only people I ever thought him the least bit hard on were atheists and materialists . . . ."[198] Correspondingly, in his discussion of his own work in the "Dedicatory Epistle" for the 1904 collection of his poems, he insists that the poems of Songs before Sunrise are not "translations into lyric verse, of another man's doctrine." Speaking of the difference between the inspiration of Mazzini and servile obedience to him, he abjures any faith which is "synonymous with servility or compatible with prostration of an abject or wavering spirit and a submissive and dethroned intelligence." That this difference applies to a larger realm than different types of hero-worship is perhaps indicated by his next sentence: ". . . I never pretended to see eye to eye with my illustrious friends and masters, Victor Hugo and Giuseppe Mazzini, in regard to the positive and passionate confidence of their sublime and purified theology."[199]

Swinburne does not directly oppose the transcendent source of Shelley's philosophy, but he does indicate a disapproval of his perfectibilian optimism. Discussing his Atalanta in a letter of 1865 to Lady Pauline Trevelyan, he says that Prometheus Unbound is "un-Hellenic" and is "spoilt, too, in my mind, by the infusion of philanthropic doctrinaire views and 'progress of the species.'"[200] This remark cannot be read only as an indication that Swinburne is still professing "art for art's sake," for it is at one with his later indictment of Tennyson and others for the same optimism in a more evolutionary context. Swinburne preferred Aeschylus here, certainly not because of the eventual reconciliation of Prometheus and the "Oppressor of mankind" which Shelley suggested was to be presented in the lost sequel to Prometheus Bound,[201] but because he preferred the "Greek fatalism" which he saw in Aeschylus and presented in his Atalanta.[202] For Swinburne, darkness does continue, even when man has renounced his Jupiter.

Atalanta in Calydon and Poems and Ballads, 1866, have always been viewed as dark works, and have often been contrasted to Songs before Sunrise. All of these works have their dark aspects, however, and the contrast, as we will see in the next chapter, is not one of essential philosophy. Hertha may be seen to be the mother of Venus and Proserpine, the main symbolic figures of Poems and Ballads.

Chapter III: VENUS AND PROSERPINE

Swinburne had been an ardent advocate of republicanism much earlier than Songs before Sunrise. It was inherited from his grandfather, reinforced by his early poetic idols, Hugo and Landor, and directed towards Italy by Byron and Shelley and the Old Mortality Society at Oxford.[1] John Nichol, the leading figure in the Society, knew Mazzini personally and stimulated Swinburne in late 1856 or early 1857 to write the "Ode to Mazzini," one of his first poems. In this poem and in "The Temple of Janus" of 1857, Swinburne already employs many of the ideas and images that govern Songs before Sunrise. In the "Ode," he envisions the "dawn" of Republican freedom and curses the "crowned serpent" of Austria "in the name of the wronged earth."[2] In the unpublished "The Temple of Janus," he presents the history of Rome up to the time of Ferdinand, "the crowned snake of Naples," and envisions beautiful Republican Rome triumphing and crushing the serpent under her heel. As the vision fades, the poet is left alone at dawn by the edge of the sea.[3]

It is usually suggested that the republican spirit of such early poems was subdued when Swinburne met Rossetti and his friends late in 1857 while they were decorating the walls of the Oxford Union Debating Hall with Arthurian scenes. Rossetti and Morris are considered to have directed Swinburne not only to the different subject matter of poems like "Queen Yseult" but also to a primary concern for the form of art itself. Poems and Ballads -- even though it contains tributes to both Hugo and Landor[4] and "A Song in Time of Order" and "A Song in

Time of Revolution," all written in the idiom of Songs before Sunrise -- is usually seen as a culmination of the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and of Baudelaire and Gautier, which so readily combined with Swinburne's own temperamental affinities for the femme fatale and the "lust, bitterness, and despair"[5] which accompanied her worship. After 1866, when Swinburne seemed to be searching for new sources of inspiration, those friends who were concerned about the public response to Poems and Ballads and Swinburne's own profligate behaviour -- his boasts of his personal "vices" and of his devotion to the "divine" Marquis[6] -- encouraged him to turn back to his earlier devotion to Republican principles. They at least partially succeeded in redirecting him by enlisting Mazzini in the cause and arranging for Swinburne to meet him personally in 1867. Mazzini urged Swinburne, as we have seen, to devote his art to the service of political freedom; he also wanted him to abandon "the absurd immoral French 'Art for Art's Sake' system and relink[ ] Art to Heaven through Earth -- to the eternal Ideal thro' the transitory symbols."[7]

Among the usual evidence cited as proof of Swinburne's rededication to politics and political art is the following passage in an important letter of October 9, 1866, in which Swinburne mentions to William Michael Rossetti that "after many months of enforced inaction through worry and weariness" he is writing again and working on A Song of Italy:

> After all, in spite of jokes and perversities -- malgré ce cher Marquis et ces foutus journaux -- it is nice to have something to love and to believe in as I do Italy. It was only Gabriel and his followers in art (l'art pour l'art) who for a time frightened me from speaking out; for ever since I was fifteen I have been equally and unalterably mad . . . about this article of faith . . . .[8]

Also cited, of course, is Songs before Sunrise, particularly the "Prelude," in which "Youth" gives up pleasure and the "Delight whose germ grew never grain /And passion dyed in its own pain" for the more fruitful concern with man's liberty. This change is directly linked with Swinburne's own rededication, and the following lines, in answer to those who continue to profess a hedonistic attitude to life, are used to support the identification:

> Play then and sing; we too have played,
> We likewise, in that subtle shade.
> We too have twisted through our hair
> Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,
> And heard what mirth the Maenads made,
> Till the wind blew our garlands bare
> And left their roses disarrayed,
> And smote the summer with strange air,
> And disengirdled and discrowned
> The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.[9]

Swinburne is said to alter his perception radically, as does the "Youth" of the poem, when he moves in Songs before Sunrise to support the liberty of the self-reliant man. "There is nothing more remarkable in the whole life of Swinburne," concludes Lafourcade, "than this sudden and spontaneous change of attitude."[10]

Those who do try to draw Songs before Sunrise and Poems and Ballads closer together often do so on psychological grounds. They first examine the biographical evidence for Swinburne's algolagnia and cite his Whippingham Papers and The Flogging Block; his letters to such friends as Charles Augustus Howell, Simeon Solomon, and Lord Houghton; or his visits to the ladies of the house in, rather appropriately, St. John's Wood as evidence of his continual and active interest in sado-masochistic practices such as flagellation.[11] Poems and Ballads is, unfortunately, read as another document in the psychological study of Swinburne. (Nicolson, for instance, dismisses "Dolores" as a "sadistic jingle" and an unfortunate and indecorous revelation of the dark underside of Swinburne's psyche.[12]) And Songs before Sunrise is considered to be a "sublimation" of the concerns of the former volume. Praz, as suggested in Chapter One, is one critic who draws together the Goddess of Liberty and "Our Lady of Pain" in this fashion:

> the Goddess Liberty whom the poet adored was only a sublimation of his own feminine type, a divinity intolerant of restraint and law (substitute for the woman of uncontrolled morals), fatal and cruel in exacting the sacrifice of human life (substitute for algolagnia).[13]

Bush and Rosenberg, among others, have continued the connection: Bush notes in passing that the Lady of Liberty is "not altogether unrelated to Dolores"; and Rosenberg suggests that although Songs before Sunrise "is in all apparent respects the opposite of Poems and Ballads," as "our Lady of Liberty displaces our Lady of Pain," both goddesses "inspire in Swinburne similar emotions of self-prostration and worship." He adds that at least Dolores could "bite," whereas the Lady of Liberty merely "bores."[14] In his detailed psychoanalytical study of Swinburne's poetry from the point of view of his abnormal sexuality, Dr. Louis Bragman alters the equation somewhat: Swinburne's "struggle against his failure at making the heterosexual adjustment" may be seen in his "longings for liberty."[15]

Such studies not only presuppose that the intermingled analysis of the man by the poetry and the poetry by the man is a viable critical practice but also ignore the dramatic nature of Poems and Ballads and other early works. Swinburne himself insisted that biographical criticism alone is not enough to account for the work of art and, indeed, may even distort its meaning and significance. Calling the biographical fallacy the "'Johnny Keats' stage of criticism," he maintained that the sympathy of Shelley and subsequent critics for Keats the man distracted them from an honest and critical estimate of his poetry.[16] He would also have objected to the modern extension of such criticism into the psychoanalytic study of the author as he has revealed (or sublimated) himself in his works.

Swinburne specifically insisted that the dramatic nature of Poems and Ballads be recognized by its critics. In his defence of the volume, Notes on Poems and Reviews (1866), he maintains (perhaps recalling Browning's comments on Pauline) that "[w]ith regard to any opinion implied or expressed throughout my book, I desire that one thing should be remembered: the book is dramatic, many-faced, multifarious . . . ." Indeed, if every poem were accepted as the "outcome and result of the writer's conviction," then "cloudy chaos and suicidal contradiction" would be the overall result. He continues:

> Byron and Shelley, speaking in their own persons . . ., openly and insultingly mocked and reviled what the English of their day held most sacred. I have not done this. I do not say that, if I chose, I would not do so to the best of my power; I do say that hitherto I have seen fit to do nothing of the kind.[17]

In a private letter to William Michael Rossetti, Swinburne qualifies this stand only by admitting that the antitheistic perspective of "Félise" is closer to his own view than the Christian outlook of such poems as "St. Dorothy"; yet the first poem is "not less formally dramatic than the others." Given the perspective of the critics, he continues, perhaps he will even have to defend himself against the opposite charge of being a "moralist," even a "deist . . . . In the eyes of 'that cursed, crawling, Christian crew' one must either be St. Francis of Assisi or the Marquis de Sade."[18] In the "Dedicatory

Epistle," Swinburne's final defence of his work as a whole, the same suggestion is put forward; but since he is also defending himself against the charge that he is too exclusively literary and entirely divorced from life, he does add that the inspiration of the poems does vary, some poems being personal and some imaginative. "If the two kinds cannot be distinguished, it is surely rather a credit than a discredit to an artist whose medium or material has more in common with a musician's than with a sculptor's."[19]

Other critics have, however, pointed out more fundamental and intrinsic affinities between the volumes -- among them, Franz Hüffer.[20] It is my contention that the same philosophy put forward in Songs before Sunrise may be seen in Poems and Ballads, even though it is less directly or positively formulated. In his second volume of poetry, Swinburne, like Byron and Shelley, speaks out in his own "person,"[21] whereas in his first, he explores dramatically from the perspective of the individual psyche both the causes and results of restriction and the difficulty of freely and joyfully striving in a world of "One forceful nature uncreate /That feeds itself with death and fate, /Evil and good, and change and time."[22] Although none of the individual perspectives is necessarily Swinburne's own, a single and higher perspective does emerge from a reading of the central poems of the volume,[23] especially those connected with the "trilogy" of poems which he discussed with William Michael Rossetti:

> I should not like to bracket 'Dolores' and the two following ["The Garden of Proserpine" and "Hesperia"] as you propose. I ought (if I did) to couple with them in front harness the 'Triumph of Time' etc., as they express that state of feeling the reaction from which is expressed in 'Dolores.' Were I to rechristen these three as trilogy, I should have to rename many earlier poems as acts in the same play.[24]

As we will see, there are also other reasons for his decision not to link the three poems. In the Notes, however, he does present them (and related poems) as "act[s] in [a] lyrical monodrame,"[25] and in doing so helps us not only in establishing his own "voice" in the volume but also in delineating the process by which the individual man achieves an acceptance of the philosophy of "Hertha."

There is, then, no great change around 1866 in Swinburne's philosophy -- or his poetic theory. The "Prelude," as we shall see, is part of a more complex process than the mere movement on Swinburne's part, under Mazzini's direction, from a dedication to the "raptures and roses of vice"[26] to a celebration of the possible and perhaps imminent freedom of man. We have seen that he did not slavishly follow Mazzini's religious tendencies but kept to his own antitheistic convictions; he also did not relinquish his own conception of the purpose and process of art to follow Mazzini's wish that he give up "art for art's sake" and reconnect "Art to Heaven through Earth." His remark that "Gabriel and his followers in . . . l'art pour l'art" kept him from speaking out about Italy is made in the same letter (of October 9, 1866) to William Michael in which he discusses the possible "trilogy" of poems in Poems and Ballads, his own defence of the volume, and those critics who judge the worth of a work only on its morality or immorality and relegate writers to the realm of St. Francis or de Sade; here he also indicates his difficulty with writing a true "song" on the more "declamatory" subject of Italian liberty.[27] The remark concerning "l'art pour l'art" refers perhaps in part to Swinburne's desire to shock his readers and critics by assuming the stance of a disciple of the "divine" Marquis (which continues in a joking fashion in the letter itself and in many subsequent personal letters), and certainly not to a new commitment to didactic art. Indeed, now that he was beginning to speak in his own voice he was particularly concerned that he would be unable to form his material from within and produce good art -- an inability which he detected in Whitman. As he says later in Under the Microscope (1872), even though he heartily agrees with Whitman's ideas, he does not necessarily approve of his poetry. Drawing a distinction between "higher prophetic" and "lower dogmatic" art, the latter being the result of an over-riding concern with doctrine and a consequent inability to fuse form and matter, he suggests that Whitman can preach but often cannot sing.[28] Although these comments on Whitman are often seen to be an instance of Swinburne's changing critical standards and another example of the effect that the personal attack of other critics had on those standards,[29] he had expressed the same opinion much earlier than 1872. For instance, in a letter of 1867, again to William Michael, he points out that Whitman is

> in part, certainly, the prophet of democracy; but not wholly, because he tries so openly to be, and asserts so violently that he is: always as if he was fighting the case out on a platform. This is the only thing I really or gravely dislike or revolt from.

In the same letter he once again confesses his own difficulty in achieving prophetic song and fears that he may be "disabled by [his] desires -- made impotent by excess of strain," that his intense convictions may over-ride his art.[30] He wishes to send William Michael a "sample" of his political verses,[31] and, when he finally does, asks that his friend "check[ ] and correct[ ] any tendency (difficult to avoid where one wants and tries to be practical, but damnable to indulge) to the 'didactic declamatory' -- the stumbling block, in this way of work, to all men -- even Hugo."[32] He makes the same request of

Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself, the man whose doctrine of "l'art pour l'art" he has supposedly abandoned. Before Songs before Sunrise goes to press, he wishes Dante Gabriel to evaluate it,

> that I may be sure it is thoroughly pure of any prosaic or didactic taint, any touch of metrical stump-oratory or spread-eagleism, such as is so liable to affect and infect all but the highest political or polemical poetry. I will have nothing of the platform in it if possible . . . .[33]

Such comments indicate that Swinburne did not give up "art for art's sake" as he understood the term.

"Art for art's sake" is a difficult and much-debated term, especially when it is applied to English poetry.[34] It may refer to the reaction against moral didacticism in art or as a critical standard for art, or against narrow bourgeois morals as a whole. It may involve the desire to shock the audience with an inversion of such ethics, or to manifest a more comprehensive view of the essence of man and the world. Yet this negative or more positive affirmation of the artist's absolute freedom in terms of subject matter may also merge with the proclamation of the necessity of fusing form and matter, or of the absolute importance of form, the first often expressed in the common analogy with music and the second in the more Parnassian metaphor of marble, gem, and cameo. Finally, it may also refer to a whole attitude towards life and experience which Wellek designates as "panaestheticism"[35] -- and be difficult to distinguish from "decadence" and "symbolism."

It should be noted here that aestheticism or the "art for art's sake" movement is linked with the increasing awareness of the amorality of nature and the unconscious mind, and also with the darkening image of the woman. The image of the femme fatale is often an embodiment of the poet's profound sense of the amoral or even evil nature of the world and of the equally ambiguous nature of man's own psyche, and a proclamation of the right to explore in poetry the depths of those mysterious and perhaps connected realms.[36] She may also be the deliberately shocking opposite of the fair lady who had been domesticated into the epitome of bourgeois virtue. In Love and Death in the American Novel, Leslie Fiedler traces a development of courtly love and the figure of the woman which is much less metaphysical and psychological in its implications than the Romantic development. He associates this tradition with the rise of middle-class culture and the development of the sentimental novel, and suggests that it is the result of the sacramentalizing of marriage in the sixteenth century and the Protestantizing of the Virgin in the north.[37] In this tradition the fair lady becomes the virtuous maiden who upholds the values of her class and society, often against the assaults of a profligate and aristocratic seducer. Her prototype is Richardson's Clarissa, and her descendants are such figures as Phoebe, Amelia, and Rose, and the now-forgotten women of countless nineteenth-century novels.[38] Such a woman became the ideal center of Victorian society. She was seen as the purer, nobler, more religious and altruistic half of society; her role was to elevate man's baser sentiments and inspire his higher impulses -- as well as to provide for his material comfort and bring up his children. She was the "angel in the house."

This phrase from Patmore has, however, been slightly misused; Patmore's work is a reminder that the Victorian stereotype of the fair lady is often more complicated than it first appears to be. As such works as The Unknown Eros and the Psyche Odes suggest, Patmore was actually attempting to present through the symbol of the woman the interpenetration of the ideal in the real, of the divine within nature and man; but he did so in the more Victorian context of religiously-sanctioned marriage and domestic love. His attempt seems to be to bring the Romantic synthesis into the realm of actual and everyday life; and in a sense he may be seen to combine both the tradition of Romanticism and that of the novel.[39] At the same time, then, the protest against the stereotype of the fair maiden may be against the too-easy optimism of the Romantics or the often-hypocritical standards of Victorian society -- or, as Carlyle's Blumine perhaps indicates, against both.

To the pure formalist, the woman may be a symbol of the perfect formal beauty of art -- her body like that of a carven goddess, her face expressionless and her eyes revealing nothing. Yet much the same woman may be a manifestation of the inextricable link between the image and the idea, the body and the soul of art -- her body indistinguishable from her soul and her gaze inward. She is "subtly of herself contemplative," as is Rossetti's "Lilith":

> And still she sits, young when the earth is old,
>   And, subtly of herself contemplative,
>   Draws men to watch the bright net she can weave,
> Till heart and body and life are in its hold.[40]

The fatality of such a woman is the terrible cost of the devotion to the indifferent ideal of art, the devotion to an exacting craft, and the often subsequent estrangement from the world and others or from the development of other aspects of the self. Frank Kermode in The Romantic Image includes many of these interrelated suggestions in his remarks on Yeats and the tradition of the woman as a symbol of art.

Discussing such figures as Gautier's Cleopatra, Flaubert's Salammbô, and Rossetti's Lilith, he points out that

> [t]hroughout this tradition, the beauty of a work of art, in which there is no division of form and meaning, no overplus of "litterature," is more or less explicitly compared with the mysterious inexpressive beauty of such women, and perhaps particularly with that of Salome . . . . "Subtly of herself contemplative" -- it is the Image, unimpassioned, wise in its whole body, that attracts unbounded passion. The young men who die for it are the true poets and painters of "Old and New Art"; in the fading world, they turn once more to that true art which is so much more than "soulless self-reflections of man's skill," and having that "luckless luck," as Yeats called it, must suffer, pay the price of that sensibility that enables them to "rend the mist of devious symbols."[41]

Swinburne, who learned much from Hugo, Baudelaire, and Gautier,[42] shares in their reaction against the restrictive bourgeois morality and moral didacticism in art. He first expresses this protest in his review of Meredith's Modern Love in 1862, and he reiterates his stance in his defence of his own volume in 1866. In his letter to the Spectator, June 7, 1962, he defends Meredith against the charges of a previous critic in the journal:

> [This critic] falls foul of [Meredith] for dealing with 'a deep and painful subject on which he has no conviction to express.' There are pulpits enough for all preachers in prose; the business of verse-writing is hardly to express convictions; and if some poetry, not without merit of its kind, has at times dealt in dogmatic morality, it is all the worse and all the weaker for that. As to subject it is too much to expect that all schools of poetry are to be for ever subordinate to the one just now so much in request with us, whose scope of sight is bounded by the nursery walls; that all Muses are to bow down before her who babbles, with lips yet warm from their pristine pap, after the dangling delights of a child's coral; and jingles with flaccid fingers one knows not whether a jester's or a baby's bells.[43]

Notes on Poems and Reviews proceeds with the same defence in the same language: poetry should be judged first of all on its poetic merit, and the poet should not be limited in subject matter to that which may be "lisped in the nursery or fingered in the schoolroom"; he should not have to be a "moral milkman" or be convicted as a "poisoner."[44]

Often Swinburne's condemnation of bourgeois morality and its hold on art focuses on the central symbol of those standards -- the virtuous woman. As early as 1859 he wrote a satire of Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House." "The Person of the House," finally published in 1882, is an amusing satire of the Victorian ideal of married love which Patmore's work seemed to capture, and of Patmore's poetic method:

> Sweet Love that sways the reeling years,
> The crown and chief of certitudes,
> For whose calm eyes and modest ears
> Time writes the rule and text of prudes --
> That, surpliced, stoops a nuptial head,
> Nor chooses to live blindly free,
> But, with all pulses quieted,
> Plays tunes of domesticity --
> That love I sing of and have sung
> And mean to sing till Death yawn sheer.[45]

The singer is invoking his goddess of Love as he awaits the arrival of Mrs. Gamp to deliver his wife's child; Mrs. Betsy Prig comes instead, and when the child is born, the husband, too shocked by its unchaste "nudity" to look at it, has to trust to the conflicting word of mother and nurse as to its sex. Swinburne uses this incident to present a specific attack on Patmore's faith in the "unseen":

> Blessed are they who have not seen,
> And yet, not seeing, have believed:
> To walk by faith, as preached the Dean,
> And not by sight, have I achieved.
> Let love, that does not look, believe;
> Let knowledge, that believes not, look:
> Truth pins her trust on falsehood's sleeve,
> While reason blunders by the book.

Mrs. Prig finally interrupts the husband's musings to remind him that the baby "wants his tea."[46]

In another early satire, Swinburne presents the new goddess of art and the "hierophant" of the new religion who "officiates at the shrine of a new and greater Diana, of the Philistines, not of the Ephesians." His "hierophant," M. Prudhomme, is the epitome of bourgeois standards and an indication of the sway of these standards over art. The gentleman has given up "developing his muscles and morals at cricket or in the boats" and has taken up art instead: "he holds opinions on poetry; nay, he has written himself, and has a school of art of his own."[47] When the master visits the International Exhibit in England, he voices the standards of a Mr. Podsnap: "Mlle. Brown's nursing sisters" brings tears to his eyes; but he is so horrified by the "wicked" pictures of Leys that they are sent back to Belgium, where the painter may "dispose of them as tavern signboards"; and he is so uncomfortable when he sits on a medieval sofa ("it was 'angular' and 'did not match his opinions'") that it is "broken up for firewood."[48] Lest his readers think that such a man is an exclusively French phenomenon, Swinburne reminds them that the English also worship the Muse of the Philistines: "We are born and baptized into the Church of Prudhomme, the most Catholic of all churches, outside of which there is no human salvation for us; and in that fold we must die, or take up with the worst fate of the worst heretics."[49] In Under the Microscope, he makes it quite clear that such are the standards of England by presenting its critical stage: "[w]e see Harlequin Virtue make love to the Goddess Grundy, and watch if we can without yawning the raddled old Columbine Cant perform her usual pirouettes in the ballet of morality . . . ."[50]

When specifically criticizing those artists who have catered to the public taste, he often singles out Tennyson -- perhaps because he himself had been compared to the Laureate by Austin and other critics. In Notes on Poems and Reviews, for example, he obviously has Tennyson and his followers in mind when he points out the predominance of the idyl in the poetry of the time. "The idyllic form," he says, "is best for domestic and pastoral poetry. It is naturally on a lower level than that of lyric or tragic verse. Its gentle and maidenly lips are somewhat narrow for the stream and somewhat cold for the fire of song. It is very fit for the sole diet of girls; not very fit for the sole sustenance of men."[51] He also complains about the "girls" of Tennyson's own poems, here surely remembering Austin:

> There is always a latent if not a patent prospensity in many of his very lovers to scold and whine after a fashion which makes even Alfred de Musset seem by comparison a model or type of manliness. His Enids and Edith Aylmers are much below the ideal mark of Wordsworth, who has never, I believe, been considered a specially great master in that kind: but his "little Letties" were apparently made mean and thin of nature to match their pitifully poor-spirited suitors. It cannot respectfully be supposed that Lord Tennyson is unaware of the paltry currishness and mean-spirited malice displayed in verse too dainty for such base uses by the plaintively spiteful manikins, with the thinnest whey of sour milk in their poor fretful veins . . . .[52]

Tennyson, apparently, could not even produce a full-blooded fatal woman but only a more fretful and demanding version of the English ideal.

Swinburne's own fatal woman hits straight at the center of Victorian morality. There is certainly a desire to shock in Poems and Ballads: "I have added yet four more jets of gushing infamy to the perennial and poisonous fountain of Dolores," he writes to Howell, and adds, "P.S. Since writing the above I have added 10 verses to D. -- très infames et très bien tournes. 'Oh! monsieur -- peut-on prendre du plaisir à telles horreurs?'"[53] And there is certainly an element of grotesque humour here and in other works of Swinburne which must be taken into consideration. He enjoyed his pose of perversity and knew that his poems would be considered shockingly audacious. But the volume has its serious elements as well.[54] Poems and Ballads is also a proclamation of the artist's right to "deal with the full life of man and the whole nature of things," as he said himself in the Notes which defend it,[55] and not just with those aspects of reality not offensive or disturbing to the readers and reviewers; it is also, as Ian Fletcher maintains, a deep exploration of the dark areas of man's psyche and the results of the "suppression and perversion of human instinct by social and religious tyrannies."[56]

Whatever the subject-matter of a poem, Swinburne insists, it is not good art unless it is formed into perfect beauty.[57] Yet even though he took part in the revival of French "fixed forms" and influenced the "English Parnassians,"[58] he was not a formalist in the strict sense of the word. Even in his early statements on the autonomy of art he concentrates not on the "certain, faultless, matchless, deathless line /Curving consummate,"[59] but on the didactic intention in art. As he says in William Blake,

> Handmaid of religion, exponent of duty, servant of fact, pioneer of morality, she cannot in any way become . . . . All the battering in the world will never hammer her into fitness for such an office as that. . . . Her business is not to do good on other grounds, but to be good on her own . . . . The contingent result of having good art about you and living in a time of noble writing or painting may no doubt be this: that the spirit and mind of men then living will receive on some points a certain exaltation and insight caught from the influence of such forms and colours of verse or painting; will become for one thing capable therefore of reasonably relishing the best; which of course implies and draws with it many other advantages of a sort you may call moral or spiritual. But if the artist does his work with an eye to such results or for the sake of bringing about such improvements, he will probably fail even in them. Art for art's sake first of all, and afterwards we may suppose all the rest shall be added to her (or if not she need hardly be overmuch concerned); but from the man who falls to artistic work with such a moral purpose shall be taken away even that which he has --

> whatever capacity for doing well in either way he may have at starting.

In William Blake, Swinburne concentrates on "l'heresie de l'enseignement" of Baudelaire, the "living critic of incomparably delicate insight and subtly good sense, himself 'impeccable' as an artist";[60] and in his discussion of Baudelaire's own artistry in his earlier review of Les Fleurs du Mal (1862), he employs the same standard: although Poe

> has written poems without any moral meaning at all there is not one poem of the Fleurs du Mal which has not a distinct and vivid background of morality to it. Only, this moral side of the book is not thrust forward in the foolish and repulsive manner of a half-taught artist . . . .[61]

The remark did not entirely please Baudelaire.

Poems and Ballads does manifest Swinburne's concern with the purely formal aspects of art and does present the sculpted beauty of the female body which is often associated with the exclusive concern with perfect form:

> The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
>   Weighted over clean
> With state of splendid hair that droops
>   Each side, Faustine.

And:

> Bright heavy brows well gathered up;
>   White gloss and sheen;
> Carved lips that make my lips a cup
>   To drink, Faustine[.][62]

And Swinburne does praise other writers, particularly Rossetti, for such perfect form, often using the image of the woman. In the poems of Rossetti,

> [the] golden affluence of images and jewel-coloured words never once disguises the firm outline, the justice and chastity of form. No nakedness could be more harmonious, more consummate in its fleshly sculpture, than the imperial array and ornament of this august poetry. Mailed in gold as of the morning girdled with gems of strange water, the beautiful body as of a carven

> goddess gleams through them tangible and taintless, without spot and default.

Yet he stresses here and in his other critical and creative works that such perfection is the result of fusing form and spirit, matter and manner:

> In the glorious poem [The House of Life] built up of all these poems there is no great quality more notable than the sweet and sovereign unity of perfect spirit and sense, of fleshly form and intellectual fire. This Muse is as the woman praised in the divine words of the poet himself: --
>
> Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought
> Nor love her body from her soul.
>
> . . . No scrutiny can distinguish nor sentence divorce the solid spiritual truth from the bodily beauty of the poem, the very and visible soul from the dazzling veil and vesture of fair limbs and features.

Swinburne also and more frequently uses the metaphor of music to suggest the connection between form and matter. "Harmony" is his word for perfection in art and he indicates what he means by it in this same essay: "[b]ut in all great poets there must be an ardent harmony, a heat of spiritual life guiding without constraining the bodily grace of motion."[63] The two metaphors are combined in his description of Salome, the "incarnate figure of music . . . indifferent and innocent . . . her beauty . . . [as] a maiden force of nature."[64]

Swinburne also often draws a distinction between "outer" and "inner music," the first being formal technique and the second, the spiritual force of the poet working through the material and, like nature, forming it from within. "Inner music," the most difficult term, is usually equated by Swinburne with "native impulse and spiritual instinct" and is much like Coleridge's "whole man" theory.[65] Generally, "harmony" may be considered the result of the fusion of the two types of music. Although Swinburne is never entirely specific in his use of terms,[66] the implication is clearly that the artist will go wrong if he is didactic or if he is a faulty technician. Even though Swinburne agreed with their ideas, he charges Whitman with the first and Byron with the second. Byron occasionally has something of an "inner music" in his "sincerity,"[67] his "energy" and his "gigantic force of spirit,"[68] but he was often devoid of both the "inner music" or "spiritual instinct" and the "outer music" or technical excellence that compose "harmony" in art.[69]

If there is a change in Swinburne's criticism it is, as Lang suggests of his views on Whitman, primarily one of "tone." Again, his early statements on "art for art's sake" are sometimes more forceful because of his desire to shock his audience with his indifference to those moral standards which restricted life and art and, as was suggested when considering his opinion of Whitman's verse, because he wished to correct a serious critical imbalance. Swinburne continually opposes the watchwords of Victorian criticism, "truth" (usually accepted religious or moral truths) and "sincerity," the first often resulting in moral didacticism and the second in a lack of concern with the formal techniques of art. In such later, more cautious remarks as the following Swinburne is but redressing a subsequent critical imbalance:

> The well-known formula of art for art's sake . . . has like other doctrines a true side to it and an untrue. Taken as an affirmative, it is a precious and everlasting truth. No work of art has any worth or life in it that is not done on the absolute terms of art . . . . We admit then that the worth of a poem has properly nothing to do with its moral meaning or design . . .; but on the other hand we refuse to admit that art of the highest kind may not ally itself with moral or religious passion . . . . In a word, the doctrine of art for art is true in the positive sense, false in the negative; sound as an affirmation, unsound as a prohibition.[70]

The now "well-known formula" has caused some artists to throw out the "higher prophetic" art along with the "lower dogmatic." As he suggests in his essay on Whistler, the public and some artists have still to be reminded of the affirmative side of the doctrine, but other artists must be reminded that it is untrue in the negative.[71]

Swinburne's own conceptions of the freedom of art and the inextricable link between form and matter in art are quite in keeping with the philosophy of the "Hertha" volume. Man, he says in Songs before Sunrise, must be free of all restrictions except those of the laws of nature and life; similarly, in his criticism he says that art must be free of all restrictions except those of art itself. In his study of Victor Hugo this connection is brought out in the following statement:

> there is the sublime liberty of expression, the supreme perfection of utterance, which never has and never will be attained except by workmen in words . . . who can understand, accept, embrace, and rejoice in the rules and conditions of their art: content in the recognition and happy in the acceptance of that immortal and immutable instinct whose impulse is for law, whose passion is for harmony, and whose service is perfect freedom.[72]

Furthermore, as he suggested in his essay on Rossetti, the fusion of matter and manner in art is linked with the fusion of soul and body in man. The connection between the two is manifested in his use of the phrase "spirit of sense" to describe both the link between body and soul and between matter and manner in art. In the following passage, for instance, he uses Shakespeare's own phrase to describe his

> music which will not be dissected or defined, the 'spirit of sense' which is one and indivisible from the body or the raiment of speech that clothes it, [and] keeps safe the secret of its sound.[73]

In some remarks, it should be added, he suggests that Christianity, with its emphasis on spirit to the exclusion of body or at least its separation of the two, is detrimental to art and usually encourages the didactic or the allegorical. And, as we have seen in Chapter One, he particularly praises those works which capture a sense of man's joyful union with the powerful energies of nature or fate. However, he does criticize Byron on aesthetic grounds, and he does praise the art of Dante and Milton.[74] He most consistently maintains that art should be free to deal with any subject matter -- and should not be judged on those grounds.

Now that it has been established that Swinburne's aesthetics involve an insistence on the freedom of art to "deal with the full life of man and the whole nature of things," it must be established that Swinburne's own apprehension of the nature of man and "things" also did not change drastically somewhere between *Poems and Ballads* and *Songs before Sunrise*. Swinburne, as suggested previously, is often considered to be extremely negative, even nihilistic, in his first works and, like de Sade, to conceive of the nature of things as wholly evil and destructive. Just as we saw that *Songs before Sunrise* is not as optimistic as is often suggested, here we will see that the earlier works are not as negative and not as influenced by de Sade as is often supposed. The image of the *femme fatale*, linked by Praz with the influence of de Sade, is not an indication that Swinburne conceived of the energies of nature and man's psyche as fundamentally destructive. It is an indication of his opposition to the kind of optimism expressed in the Romantic image of the fair lady, and an expression of his more inclusive conception of the creative and destructive aspects of the inward forces of man and nature. As Fletcher's comments on Swinburne suggest, in his early work he is also engaged in an analysis of those forces which cause or enhance the perversion of man's natural energies. His *femme fatale* is also often involved in his presentation of the continuing results of the restrictions of religious morality; here he often returns to the Christian (particularly the medieval) tradition of the woman as a symbol of the flesh and the world and therefore evil, or to the courtly (which he tends to link with the Christian) tradition of the woman as a symbol of an unattainable ideal and Godlike perfection. Many of his early works analyze the effects of this dualistic separation of body and soul and this conception of an ideal state of existence beyond that of the realities of earth.

Some of these effects are, as previously suggested, put forward in the early plays, particularly in *Rosamond*. Here we have the opposite views of existence expressed by Rosamond and by both Eleanor and Constance. In her discussion with Constance in Act I, Rosamond expresses contempt for the "raiment" of "coloured custom,"[75] particularly the restrictions placed upon man by the Christian ideals of chastity and marriage.[76] She denies that she feels "shame" or "fear" of heavenly or earthly reprisal -- two words which occur frequently in Swinburne's early works as indications of the effect of the separation of body and soul and the submission to God. Swinburne's Rosamond is in this respect the exact opposite of Daniel's or Drayton's Rosamond, and perhaps deliberately so: in both *The Complaint of Rosamond* and "The Epistle of Rosamond to King Henrie the Second," she repeatedly indicates the "shame" which her relationship with Henry causes her;[77] but here she says,

> Shame? who said shame? am I so sick of love
> That shame can hurt me? there's no shame in the world
> Whose wound would hurt me more than too hard a kiss

> If love kept by the face of blinking shame
> To kill the pain with patience.
> . . . .
> . . . .
> I could well pity thee, dull snake, poor fool,
> Faint shame, too feeble to discredit me.[78]

Swinburne's Rosamond, instead, professes faith in the power of naked love (of which, as she says in her speech on her archetypal powers, she is one aspect), the intensity of life (which includes both pleasure and pain), and the holiness of the flesh (beauty here having its own morality). From the Christian perspective, however, she represents the evils of the flesh. As Hugh tells the choir-boy Arthur, "that white woman with such eyes /Is worse in hell than any devil that seethes; /She keeps the colour of it in her hair /That shakes like flame so"; and to Queen Eleanor she is the golden-haired snake.[79] But the clothed hypocrisy and the jealous cruelty of the Christian position is stressed throughout the play. Act I ends with Constance's anticipation of the eventual punishment of Rosamond:

> Fair fool, with her soft shameful mouth; at least
> I keep clean hands to do God's offices
> And serve him with my noose upon her neck.

Eleanor, too, thinks she does God's work and compares herself to God's priest:

> It were good game to get white iron out
> As did God's priest with a king's harlot once,
> Burn up your hair and brand between your eyes
> That I might have you wear me so in red.[80]

The sensual pleasure she obtains from executing her task is obvious throughout the last act of the play.

It may be briefly suggested in this context that in Chastelard the woman is not the agent of God but has, as it were, replaced God in the eyes of her lover. In the play, Swinburne seems to link courtly love with the love of the soul for God expressed in the mystical tradition. Mary Stuart herself provides the connection in the following lines which are quoted by Lafourcade from one of the early versions of the play:

> Chastelard,
> Take notice you steal words to praise me with
> That are holy Mary's and not mine,
> Who am not holy.[81]

In qualifying Praz's examination of the sado-masochistic elements in the play, Gerald B. Kinneavy also makes the same suggestion:

> The pleasure that Chastelard takes in his death is not so simple as "pleasure in pain." Rather, I think the situation is loosely analogous to that of the Christian martyr who welcomes his death not because of the pain involved, but because of the hope of eternal reward. So Chastelard welcomes his death at Mary's hands because of his own hope of ideal union with her after death.[82]

Swinburne associates both traditions, then, with a longing for the perfect union impossible on earth, a longing which culminates in a desire for the release of death. Swinburne's analysis of the courtly love tradition is, however, more complicated than this: courtly love also has the element of guilty sensuality about it, which makes Chastelard see Mary as a cruel Venus, a "Venus crowned that eats the hearts of men."[83] Swinburne certainly does not condemn Chastelard's attitudes in his drama, but he does provide an indication of the causes and effects of the lover's impulses.

These same impulses, particularly the devotion to the cruel Venus, are also explored in Poems and Ballads. The main poems of the volume have been considered to be a reflection of the influence of de Sade on Swinburne's sensibility; it is my contention, however, that they reflect Swinburne's awareness that de Sade's cruelty and his negative view of "nature" were indications of his incomplete emancipation from the Christian conception of existence. As Julian Baird points out in his excellent article on the subject, once Swinburne had actually read de Sade's works, he had serious objections to his philosophy.[84] Swinburne may have valued de Sade's perspective as an ironic inversion of Romantic optimism,[85] and he certainly liked to evoke him in his letters as part of his pose of perversity;[86] but he did not find a satisfactory philosophical answer here. In 1861, before he had read de Sade, he wrote "Charenton en 1810." The poem indicates that he expected to find a true revolutionary, one who revolted not only against empire but also against priests, the God of the theists, and the moral restrictions of Christianity.[87] However, when Monckton-Milnes (later Lord Houghton) finally consented to lend him a copy of Justine in 1862, Swinburne was at first amused by the grotesque sexual horrors de Sade presented and then bored by de Sade's unimaginative repetition of them. Ultimately, he was disappointed in his great revolutionary. He addresses de Sade:

> You take yourself for a great pagan physiologist and philosopher -- you are a Christian ascetic bent on earning the salvation of the soul through the mortification of the flesh. You are one of the family of St. Simeon Stylites. You are a hermit of the Thebaid turned inside out. . . . Paganism washes its hands of you. You belong to Christian Egypt. . . . It matters little that you have forgotten your own genealogy, or that you operate rather on the flesh of others than your own. Your one knack is to take common things, usual affections, natural pleasures and make them walk on their heads; by the simple process of reversing, any one might write as good a Justine as yours. . . . We took you for a sort of burlesque Prometheus; you are only a very serious Simeon Stylites -- in an inverted posture. You worship the phallus as those first ascetics worshipped the cross; you seek your heaven by the very same road as they sought theirs.

He concludes: "I drop my apostrophe to M. de Sade, having relieved my mind for good and all of its final judgment on a matter of some curiosity and interest to me."[88] He had discovered that de Sade did not use his reversals only as "burlesques" of optimism but actually believed not in the undirected amorality of nature[89] but in her active evil. De Sade's view of nature and his sadism are expressions of the Christian and dualistic belief in the evil of the world and the flesh and the good of the spirit. As Baird explains, "Rather than asserting the dignity of the flesh as indissolubly wedded to spirit, Sade mortifies the flesh by accepting the old error of asceticism that flesh and spirit are divisible."[90]

In both his early plays and his comments on de Sade, Swinburne associates Christianity with cruelty and perversity. In addition, in his "Notes on the Text of Shelley," for instance, he calls Christianity "the most hateful creed in all history; uglier than the faith of Moloch or Kali, by the hideous mansuetude, the devilish loving-kindness of its elections and damnations."[91] And in one of his letters he makes clear its associations with sexual perversion. Finding it amusing that Newman considers "'amorousness' and 'religion' 'such irreconcilable elements,'" Swinburne suggests that

> his church has always naturally and necessarily been the nursing mother of 'pale religious lechery' (as Blake with such grand scorn labels the special quality of celibate sanctity 'that wishes but acts not'), of holy priapism and virginal nymphomania. Not to speak of the filthy visions of the rampant and rabid nun who founded 'the worship of the Sacred Heart' (. . . -- in the phallic processions they called it by a more -- and less -- proper name), he might have found passages from St. Theresa which certainly justify from a carnal point of view her surname of the Christian Sappho.[92]

Swinburne seems to have learned much about the results of dualism and restriction from his reading of Blake. Blake's "The Human Abstract," he suggests, is an explanation of the "growth of [such] error"

> through soft sophistries of pity and faith, subtle humility of abstinence and fear, under which the pure simple nature lies corrupted and strangled; through selfish loves which prepare a way for cruelty and cruelty that works by spiritual abasement and awe.

Tirzah, he says, is a symbol of the separation of flesh from the spirit, and of the "'religion' which occupies itself with laying down laws for the flesh; which, while pretending (and that in all good faith) to despise the body and bring it into subjection as with control of bit and bridle, does implicitly overrate its power upon the soul for evil and good, and thus falls foul of facts on all sides by assuming that spirit and flesh are twain . . . ." Rahab is her mother, "impure by dint of chastity and forbearance from such things as are pure to the pure of heart . . . ."[93] And "Saint de Sade"[94] is "impure by dint" of his inverted asceticism and incomplete emancipation from the discordant dualisms of Christianity. His is not the "moral pantheism" of Blake, which is based upon the identity of body and soul.[95]

It is interesting to note that Swinburne's analysis of de Sade and the sources of sadism agrees with that of many modern commentators. They also suggest that the Marquis is motivated by a desire to atone for his guilt, to transcend the flesh by punishing it and therefore to achieve spiritual union with the divine.[96] Those who comment on the general phenomenon of sadism suggest that it is particularly prevalent in periods when God appears to be a more distant force and the Devil therefore a more real power. As Riencourt notes, such was the case at the close of the Middle Ages, when witchhunts were but one aspect of the revival of faith in evil.[97] The same suggestion is often made of the later nineteenth century: Cobban associates the pessimism of this period with the survival of the religious impulse; Praz links the sadism of French decadent literature with Catholicism; and Croft-Cooke defines the decadents as those poets who were "awed by their own notion of sin, infected with a puritanical belief in the evil of pleasure and the pleasures of evil."[98]

Baudelaire is also, although perhaps less conclusively than de Sade, linked by Swinburne with the survival of the religious impulse -- as he is by many of his modern critics, Croce, Eliot, and Mauriac among them.[99] In the review of Les Fleurs du Mal mentioned previously, Swinburne indicates that the morality which he found to be so artistically presented by Baudelaire is not pagan but Christian. He suggests that "there is not one of these poems that could have been written . . . when it was not the fashion to dig for moral motives and conscious reasons." Indeed, "[l]ike a medieval preacher, when [Baudelaire] has drawn the heathen love, he puts sin on its right hand, and death on its left."[100] In his review of Rossetti's poems, Swinburne also associates Baudelaire with the troubled and guilty Christianity which "infected" Byron. Byron, he claims, suffered the "hankering and restless habit of half fearful retrospect towards the unburied corpses of old creeds"; and Baudelaire at least partially shares in this incomplete emancipation from belief.[101] The nature of the "pervading note of spiritual tragedy" which he detects in the "brooding verse of Baudelaire"[102] is also hinted at in Swinburne's remarks on Simeon Solomon. Solomon's art is touched by the "shadow" of the sorrow and troubled thought of the Hebrew tradition. His hermaphroditic figures with their mysterious expressions of combined pleasure and pain, spiritual or sensual, would have been understood by

Baudelaire, the "most loving of all students of strange beauty and abnormal refinements, of painful pleasures of soul and inverted raptures of sense."[103]

Such observations are perhaps behind Swinburne's comment in 1901 that he "never had really much in common with Baudelaire."[104] An earlier indication of his awareness of their differences can perhaps be seen in his reaction to Henry Morley's review of Poems and Ballads. When Morley defended the volume in the Examiner in 1866 by making the same sort of observation that Swinburne had made about Les Fleurs du Mal, Swinburne did not accept the analysis. Morley said that Swinburne's "lesson" was also Christian: "He sings of Lust as Sin, its portion Pain and its end Death. He paints its fruit as Sodom apples very fair without, ashes and death within." He concludes his review with the observation "That a book thus dealing with the desire of the flesh should have been denounced as profligate because it does not paint the outside of Sodom's apple of like colour with the ashes it shows within, says little indeed for the thoroughness of current criticism."[105] Morley's own critical error is, of course, that he mistakes the perspective of the speakers of some of the poems in the volume for Swinburne's own.

Swinburne, however, did find the attitude of Baudelaire (like that of de Sade) to be a useful antidote to the false optimism of the day. Baudelaire's "intermittent Christian reaction" is, he maintains, "more than half" the result of his abhorrence of "the philanthropic optimism of sciolists in whose eyes the whole aim or mission of things is to make the human spirit finally comfortable" -- "as though," he adds, "the spirit should seek a fiery refuge in the good old hell of the faithful from the watery new paradise of liberal theosophy and ultimate amiability of all things."[106] Indeed, Swinburne's own disbelief in "the ultimate amiability of all things," his opposition to optimism, has made him appear to be more like de Sade and Baudelaire than he considered himself to be. Swinburne also insists upon the permanent reality of evil, which cannot be reformed away and is not "less natural than Good."[107] And his awareness of "refluent evil and good, alternate grief and joy, life inextricable from death, change inevitable and insuperable fate"[108] which he considers to be the essence of existence and to be captured in the tragedies of Aeschylus is, admittedly, often difficult to distinguish from the viewpoint which has been darkened by Christian doubt, division and discord -- except in terms of the attitude of the individual toward existence. Like Nietzsche, Swinburne opposed not only the belief in the transcendent ideal of Platonism and Christianity (which Nietzsche considered the Platonism of the masses) and the submissive fear and otherworldly hope which it fosters, but also the pessimism which is an incomplete reaction from such idealism and still manifests a denial of life and a desire to escape from the tragic realities of existence. This is Nietzsche's "pessimism of weakness," and it involves a desire for oblivion either through voluptuous intoxication or resignation.[109] Nietzsche associates such pessimism with Wagner and Schopenhauer and opposes it to the positive, strong pessimism of those, including himself, who do not attempt to negate the Dionysian or tragic realities of life,[110] the "terrible and the problematical elements characteristic of all existence."[111] Swinburne's own reaction against the transcendent ideal may be seen in Atalanta, and his reaction against the "pessimism of weakness" in the figures of Venus and Proserpine in Poems and Ballads.

In a brief but suggestive article on Atalanta in Calydon, Terry L. Meyers points out that Swinburne's drama echoes Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and is in one sense his attempt to deny the optimism of Shelley and "to mark off his distance from the Romantic poet."[112] Meyers' point that Swinburne's drama is entirely pessimistic, that he employs images and ideas from Shelley as "keynotes of philanthropy, benevolence, and optimism in his larger symphony of hatred, malevolence, and pessimism," that he shows that the "gods of destruction and hatred, Shelley's Jupiter, are not to be overcome,"[113] is, as we shall see, not entirely correct. But in establishing this point Meyers does indicate that Swinburne's Artemis is described by certain characters in the play in images which recall Shelley's Asia. In the opening speech of the play, he notes, when the Chief Huntsman prays to Artemis to let "thine eyes fill the world /And thy lips kindle [it] with swift beams, let earth /Laugh," his words echo the description both of Asia, whose "lips enkindle /With their love the breath between them," and of the joyful earth at the end of Prometheus Unbound, when "regeneration" has been achieved.[114] Similarly, the Chorus, which consistently echoes the prevailing mood of the play or of the previous speaker, calls Artemis "The mother of months" and "Maiden most perfect, lady of light," and anticipates the coming of spring and the perfect harmony of love:

> For winter's rains and ruins are over,
>   And all the season of snows and sins;
> The days dividing lover and lover,
>   The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
  Blossom by blossom the spring begins. (249-250)

The appellation "Mother of months" is, as Meyers notes, also present in Prometheus Unbound,[115] and Asia is consistently depicted as the goddess of Light and of Love. In the following lines, for instance, the images are combined as she is linked with Aphrodite:

The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprising, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Aegean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven[.][116]

This conception of the "lady of light" and the hope for the kind of "millennial spring," as Meyers calls it,[117] of the final act of Prometheus Unbound is, however, not borne out by the events of Atalanta. In fact, it is immediately refuted by Althaea, who refuses to praise Artemis and reminds the Chorus that

Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day,
Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;
Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?
And though the spring put back a little while
Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,
And the iron time of cursing, yet I know
Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm
Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days. (251)

Althaea convinces the Chorus of the truth of her words, and the next choral ode is an echo of her conception of the dark contraries of life given to man by the "high gods": "Pleasure, with pain for leaven" and "Love that endures for a breath: /Night, the shadow of light, /And life, the shadow of death" (258-259). She also eventually convinces the Chorus that love, in the form of Atalanta, is the curse that will bring on the new cycle of destruction (255 and 257), and the third choral ode is an indictment of the optimistic view of love. In this ode, we have an entirely different presentation of the birth of Aphrodite than that put forward by Shelley:

For an evil blossom was born
  Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
    Blood-red and bitter of fruit[.]

And:

A perilous goddess was born;
  And the waves of the sea as she came
Clove, and the foam at her feet,
    Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
  A fleshly blossom, a flame
Filling the heavens with heat
    To the cold white ends of the north. (273 and 274)

Indeed, the following lines from the ode seem to refer directly to Shelley's belief in the beneficent power of Asia, or Love:

For all they said upon earth,
  She is fair, she is white like a dove,
    And the life of the world in her breath
Breathes, and is born at her birth;
  For they knew thee for mother of love,
    And knew thee not mother of death. (274)

The imagery in this passage is associated not only with Shelley's Asia and the Chorus' earlier and optimistic conception of Artemis but also with Meleager's vision of Atalanta, who first appears in the play immediately after this ode. The play undermines not only the idea of a beneficent transcendent source but also the idea of the immanence of such a power. Both Artemis, whose power is actually difficult to distinguish from that of Zeus (the equivalent of Shelley's Jupiter), and Atalanta, her earthly embodiment (or "hypostasis," as Wier suggests[118]) are seen to be destructive to man's consciousness and conception of existence. To Meleager, Atalanta is the "Pure . . . light lit at the hands of gods" (279), and at the beginning of the play the

Chorus also conceives of her as "holier than all holy days or things" and "filled /With higher thoughts than heaven" (255). But Atalanta is associated by Althaea with those dark forces which, she first reminds the Chorus, are also -- and for her, central -- aspects of Artemis: "snows," "iron," "storm," and "fire" (251, quoted above).

Atalanta is described throughout the play in imagery of barrenness: she is "snowy-souled" (248)[119] and her true home is the "flowerless fields of heaven" (247). As Oeneus suggests, her perfection and purity are not like the "natural flower of things /That grows and bears and brings forth fruit and dies" (270). That she is above the fruitful contraries of life is also suggested by the fact that she is a manly woman, a kind of androgynous figure. Swinburne's poem "Hermaphroditus" and his comments on it in Notes on Poems and Reviews are certainly relevant here. The poem was inspired by the Greek statue in the Louvre, but it was also influenced by two other poems recalling the same statue: Shelley's Witch of Atlas and Gautier's "Contralto."[120] In both works (as in Plato's Symposium) the hermaphrodite is a symbol of divine wholeness and perfect unity before division.[121] But Swinburne puts a different construction on the symbol: the figure is the "double blossom of two fruitless flowers," "a thing of barren hours,"

> Turning the fruitful feud of hers and his
> To the waste wedlock of a sterile kiss[.][122]

As he comments in the Notes, "The sad and subtle moral of this myth . . . is that perfection once attained on all sides is a thing thenceforward barren of use or fruit; whereas the divided beauty of separate woman and man -- a thing inferior and imperfect -- can serve all turns of life."[123] The imagery of barrenness in "Hermaphroditus" and in Swinburne's comments on it is that which characterizes Atalanta.

Indeed, she herself makes the same sort of comparison: she "shall have no man's love" and no "children born":

> Far off from flowers or any bed of man,
> Shall my life be for ever: me the snows
> That face the first o' the morning, and cold hills
> Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling storms
> And many a wandering wing of noisy nights[.](282)

And the opposite idea of "fruitful feud" or joyful strife is that which, as we have seen, characterizes Swinburne's attitude to existence. The "moral" of the play seems to be that the image of unity and perfection above strife -- Atalanta, or heaven itself elsewhere in the play -- causes in the mind of man discord and "division," a word which Thomas notes predominates in the play.[124] In this sense Atalanta is associated with "iron," "storm," and "fire" (particularly in the context of the fatal brand).[125] The same idea is presented in the chorus on love: like the comparison of earth with heaven, the expectation that love is a benevolent force causes "strife" and "division of soul" over and above man's struggle in the natural world, with the "things" of the "Hymn of Man." As the Chorus asks:

> Was there not evil enough,
>   Mother, and anguish on earth
>   Born with man at his birth,
> Wastes underfoot, and above
>   Storm out of heaven, and dearth,
>   Shaken down from the shining thereof
>   Wrecks from afar overseas
>   And peril of shallow and firth[?](275)

The Chorus, following Althaea, views the world as evil and is unable to accept the contraries of life because of its conception of the "high gods." Meleager, however, seems to have participated with joy in the natural struggles of existence, as his speech recalling his trip with the Argonauts indicates. For Meleager, the greatest of all his past experiences was his trip with Jason over the seas. Then he saw

> Wild heights untravelled of the wind, and vales
> Cloven seaward by their violent streams, and white
> With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf of brine;
> Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and bowing birdwise
> Shriek with birds' voices, and with furious feet
> Tread loose the long skirts of a storm; and saw
> The whole white Euxine clash together and fall
> Full-mouthed, and thunderous from a thousand throats:
> Yet we drew thither and won the fleece and won
> Medea, deadlier than the sea[.](269)

Yet even though he won out over the elements of existence, was successful on his journey over the seas, he still continues to have reverence for "Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of things" (273),[126] and to worship Atalanta (269). This is his fatal flaw.

Althaea's position seems closer to Swinburne's own, and in his article on the play Meyers assumes that they are virtually identical. Indeed, in her pessimistic warnings to Meleager, in her bitter denunciation of the "high gods" as malevolent forces (echoed in the chorus on "the supreme evil, God," 287), and in her more realistic apprehension of the contraries of existence, that night follows day and life and death are one, she comes close to the position which Swinburne presents in Songs before Sunrise. Yet there are significant differences. She still continues to believe in the reality of the "high gods," to attribute the realities of existence to an external divine law, and to contrast life on earth with another and perfect life in heaven. Even though, unlike the idealist Meleager, she sees this divine power as malevolent and divine justice as often arbitrary, she has not completely emancipated herself from the religious perspective. Like de Sade, she has merely substituted evil for good and therefore stresses the dark anguish of existence. Hers is the "fear"[127] which, like that of Byron and Baudelaire, is the result of the remnants of faith (and which is also to Swinburne in part a welcome relief from the optimism of those more like Meleager). Because she still fears the retribution of the gods, she urges on her son a reverence for divine law and a respect for custom: "Child, if a man serve law through all his life /And with his whole heart worship, him all gods /Praise." Man will "prosper" "not through laws torn up, /Violated rule and new face of things" (265). These are strange words, considering that she herself has denounced the gods and refused to pray to Artemis. But her position is partially explained by the central chorus on "the supreme evil, God." In the chorus, we have not only the same emphasis on the anguish of existence but also an indication of the effects of belief in the "God most high" (289) and the reason why such worship continues. The Chorus first denounces

> The lord of love and loathing and of strife
>   Who gives a star and takes a sun away;
> Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife
>   To the earthly body and grievous growth of clay;
> Who turns the large limbs to a little flame
>   And binds the great sea with a little sand;
> Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame;
>   Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand;
> Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,
>   Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,
> Smites without sword, and scourges without rod;
>   The supreme evil, God. (287)

The language here is that in which the dualistic belief in the false God is condemned in Songs before Sunrise. But in this volume of poetry Swinburne proclaims that the idea of a high God is dead, whereas the members of the Chorus, like Althaea, resign themselves "with hearts rent and knees made tremulous" to his cruel strength. "Fear" and "shame," the two attitudes condemned by Rosamond, predominate:

>   But ye, keep ye on earth
>   Your lips from over-speech,
> Loud words and longing are so little worth;
>   And the end is hard to reach.

> For silence after grievous things is good,
>   And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,
> And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
>   And lordship of the soul.
> But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
> And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
> For words divide and rend;
> But silence is more noble till the end. (289)

These lines are actually almost a complete catalogue of the attitudes to existence which Swinburne elsewhere condemns.

Neither Meleager nor his mother, then, puts forward Swinburne's position of freely and joyfully facing and accepting earth's "divine contraries." All of the characters manifest attitudes which Swinburne elsewhere denounces -- attitudes like the "fear and self-contempt and barren hope" that Shelley's Prometheus finds in those who are subjected to Jupiter.[128] In Swinburne's play we have the false optimism of the Chief Huntsman, the destructive idealistic love of Meleager, and the fear and bitter resignation of Althaea.

Althaea is certainly a complex figure and is as central to the play as Atalanta. Understanding her character is fundamental to a correct interpretation of the play, and critical commentary has differed greatly here. First of all, because she rails against the "high gods" and because she is often identified with the Earth-Mother, she is sometimes seen as a Hertha-figure who puts forward Swinburne's own views. We have already examined Althaea's conception of the "high gods" as malevolent forces; McGann suggests that she should be linked with the figure of Mother Earth in Songs before Sunrise. He notes that Althaea calls upon earth and identifies herself with the force of creation and destruction when she lights the fatal brand and thereby ends her son's life:

Thou, old earth,
That has made man and unmade; thou whose mouth
Looks red from the eaten fruits of thine own womb;
Behold me with what lips upon what food
I feed and fill my body; even with flesh
Made of my body.(314)

John O. Jordan adds that the dying Meleager also makes the same identification:

thou too, queen,
The source and end, the sower and the scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought that slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring that feeds,
To make me and unmake me -- thou, I say,
Althaea, since my father's ploughshare, drawn
Through fatal seedland of a female field,
Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten ear
Strong from the sun and fragrant from the rains
I sprang and cleft the closure of thy womb[.](330)[129]

McGann also notes that Althaea is identified with fate and with love, two forces which in Songs before Sunrise (and in "Tristram of Lyonesse," as we shall see in Chapter Five) are linked with the power of the Great Goddess Hertha.[130]

A second interpretation concentrates on the fact that Althaea urges on Meleager obedience to the gods and respect for law and custom. Althaea is seen by Thomas L. Wymer as the powerful conservative force in culture, a symbol of the strong maternal force in society which is concerned with "maintaining the family's respectability, . . . averting above all things the disintegration of the family."[131] This maternal conservatism is, he says, what destroys Meleager. Morse Peckham adds to this interpretation (and to our previous suggestion that through the figure of Atalanta Swinburne shows his opposition to Romantic idealism) by suggesting that the play is a denunciation of Victorian culture by way of its central institution, the family, and through the figure of the mother.[132]

The two critical interpretations have already been resolved in terms of Althaea's perspective as an individual who both reviles and fears the gods.[133] In terms of her symbolic relationship with the controlling energies of earth and the central forces of society, it may be suggested that the matriarchal principle is under the influence and control of the patriarchal. Like Shelley's Mother Earth at the beginning of Prometheus Unbound, she still fears the retribution of the supreme God.[134] Even when she sees herself as one with fate, she still considers herself an agent of the gods.[135] On the social level, Althaea takes her son's life for that of her brothers and, in justifying her act, asks, "Are not our fathers and our brethern one, /And no man like them?" (304). It could also be suggested that her attitude to Atalanta also partakes of a submission to patriarchal law. To her, a woman's proper lot is marriage, and

> A woman armed makes war upon herself,
> Unwomanlike, and treads down use and wont
> And the sweet common honour that she hath,
> Love, and the cry of children, and the hand
> Trothplight, and mutual mouth of marriages.(265)

Her attitude may be linked with that of Ismene in Antigone. As Fromm suggests, Antigone supports the matriarchal principle, but Ismene advocates paternal law and is a "symbol of women under patriarchal domination." She says to Antigone, "Nay, we must remember first, that we were born women, as who should not strive with men; next, that we are ruled by the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet sorer."[136] Althaea's attitude is also in keeping with that of her brothers, Toxeus and Plexippus. As Plexippus says, a woman should help men "prosper" by marriage or by offering herself as a sacrifice to the gods; but if she "rides" and strives with men,

> Then shall the heifer and her mate lock horns,
> And the bride overbear the groom, and men
> Gods[.](281)[137]

He ends his speech with an invocation to Zeus, as does Meleager, even though the latter is more aware of the power of "mothers." "For there is nothing terribler to men /Than the sweet face of mothers, and the might," Meleager proclaims; yet he ends his speech,

> but thou, God,
> Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of things,
> Father, be swift to see us, and as thou wilt
> Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt, refrain.(273)

At the same time, of course, the actual power of the Earth Mother continues, regardless of whether man believes in it or in its self-sufficiency. As was suggested concerning Erechtheus, the truth that Althaea and the Chorus attribute to the transcendent God is that of nature: Hertha works with the contraries of night and light, life and death, and without regard for the individual. But because this power is attributed to a divine source, for the various reasons explored here, the individual sees nature as a malevolent force and is unable to joyfully accept the actualities of existence. The difference is that which Murfin sees in Swinburne's later Greek drama -- the difference between "Chthonic choice" and "subservience to the gods." The Chthonian choice is not taken by any of the characters here; in Atalanta, once again, Swinburne is exploring the individual and cultural attitudes which mitigate against such freedom.

Swinburne continues to explore these attitudes in Poems and Ballads, particularly in the "trilogy" of "Dolores," "The Garden of Proserpine," and "Hesperia" and the poems related to it. The first group of poems, the "Dolores" poems, is dominated by the figure of

Venus. She is not, however, the pagan Venus of love and the fecundity of life. She has already been darkened by the Christian perspective. This darkening is evident in the paired poems with which Swinburne opens the volume, "A Ballad of Life" and "A Ballad of Death." As Baird suggests, these poems can be compared to Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience,[138] except that in the first medieval ballad the state of innocence has already passed. The poet-dreamer sees his lady standing at the center of "a place of wind and flowers, /Full of sweet trees and colour of glad grass," but she is already sorrowing for "glad things gone" and is surrounded by the allegorical male figures of "Lust," "Shame," and "Fear."[139] In the second ballad, Venus herself appears, not joyfully naked but shrouded and hooded in a "raiment" which, as Baird suggests, "is a symbol of shame and the weary prurience of secret and covered love":[140]

> Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline
> Were painted all the secret ways of love
> And covered things thereof,
> That hold delight as grape-flowers hold their wine;
> Red mouths of maidens and red feet of doves,
> And brides that kept within the bride-chamber
> Their garment of soft shame,
> And weeping faces of the wearied loves
> That swoon in sleep and awake wearier,
> With heat of lips and hair shed out like flame.[141]

This is the perspective on love which is held by the speaker in the next poem in the volume: Tannhäuser, whose "lady" is Venus herself. There are indications in "Laus Veneris" that Venus should, instead, be seen as the divine force of life and nature. She is given the same archetypal depths and dimensions as was Hertha and is presented not only as a "blossom of the flowering seas"[142] -- "Out of the naked sea /Making the foam as fire whereon she trod, /And as the inner flower of fire was she"[143] -- but also more directly as the chthonic goddess of the seasons of the earth -- "The strewings of the ways wherein she trod /Were the twain seasons of the day and night" (11. 11-12,11). This conception of Venus is in accordance with her original mythological significance as a goddess of growth, of gardens and flowers, and of the "moisture that courses through the veins of everything that has life,"[144] and with the use of this Venus Genetrix by philosophers as a symbol of the energies of the World-Soul.[145]

Suggestions of this conception of Venus do survive in some accounts of her relationship with Tannhäuser. As Swinburne would have known, in treating the legend of Venus and Tannhäuser, Wagner, perhaps following Jacob Grimm, allows for this perspective by suggesting a link between Venus and Holda, an old German goddess of nature, and having a simple shepherd sing of Holda and the coming of spring when Tannhäuser leaves the Venusberg.[146] Swinburne could not have heard the opera at the time he was writing "Laus Veneris," but, as suggested in Chapter II, he was probably familiar with Gautier's account of it in 1857. Furthermore, as Hyder establishes, one of Swinburne's main sources for the poem was Tannhauser: Or, The Battle of the Bards (1861), a summary of Wagner's version written in the form of a Tennysonian idyl by Julian Fane and Robert Lytton.[147] Swinburne, quite significantly, omits from his version the redemptive force of the fair and chaste maiden Elizabeth which is included in this idyl. He would have been in agreement with Meredith's comments on the poem:

> The former is a prim good miss, a shrew when in passion; she quite justifies (to me) Tannhäuser's choice of the dear voluptuous Goddess . . . who, I begin to think, is the favorite daughter of Mother Earth.[148]

Yet Tannhäuser, the speaker of Swinburne's dramatic monologue, is ultimately unable to connect Venus with the pantheistic World-Soul.

Instead, his divine source is the transcendent Christian God, and nature is divested for him of all divinity. For him, Venus is but the "body" (l. 29, 12, for instance) and the "world's delight" (l. 9, 11) which must be rejected by the soul dedicated to God. Tannhäuser is acting on the "old ascetic assumption that the body is of its nature base and the soul of its nature noble, and that between the two there is a great gulf fixed, neither to be bridged over nor filled up."[149] Because of his dualistic Christian perspective he is unable to accept the body and the passions as a real part of man and therefore equally divine with the soul. It is his Christian value-system that makes nature a harlot and his life with her an eternal hell. As Swinburne says himself in his Notes defending the poem, the ironic "tragedy" of the legend is that Tannhäuser "believes in Christ" and is "bound to Venus," that "the knight who has renounced Christ believes in him; the lover who has embraced Venus disbelieves in her."[150] The tragedy, it could be suggested, is that which every Christian who conceives of his soul as divine and his body as evil must endure on earth; but the irony has something in common with the inverted asceticism of de Sade. Both men are incompletely emancipated from the Christian perspective and, while they do embrace the sensual pleasure of Venus, are unable to rid themselves of the awareness that this is their sin and the punishment for it.[151]

Tannhäuser's overall attitude is, then, in keeping with the medieval conception of Venus as a symbol of destructive sexual love[152] and is indicative of the Christian transformation of the pagan gods into demonic forces which Heine, for one, described in his Gods in Exile (1853). Although he did not receive Baudelaire's pamphlet on

Wagner's Tannhäuser until his own work was complete, Swinburne himself suggests that his goddess is much like the one Baudelaire had presented:

> If any one desires to see . . . the conception of the medieval Venus which it was my aim to put into verse, let him turn to the magnificent passage in which M. Baudelaire describes the fallen goddess, grown diabolic in ages that would not accept her as divine.[153]

It is also interesting to note in this context that in his elegy on Baudelaire, "Ave atque Vale," the same conception of the "goddess grown diabolic" is presented -- and, in support of the previous contention that Swinburne was aware of a certain Christian element in Baudelaire, that Baudelaire is here compared to Tannhäuser himself:

> That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,
> That thing transformed which was the Cytherean
> With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
> Long since, and a face no more called Erycine;
> A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
> Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
> Did she, a sad and second prey, compel
> Into the footless places once more trod,
> And shadows hot from hell.[154]

This is, as Swinburne suggests in his William Blake, the usual depiction of Venus in the "Hörsel legend, which shows the religious or anti-Satanic view of the matter; though there too there is some pity or sympathy implied for the pagan side of things, revealing in the tradition the presence and touch of some poet."[155]

Throughout "Laus Veneris," Tannhäuser alternates between the natural desire for sensual pleasure and the Christian conviction that it is essentially evil, between the desire to be one with Venus and the conviction that he must somehow escape from her:

> Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
> But lo her wonderfully woven hair!
> And thou didst heal us with thy piteous kiss;
> But see now, Lord; her mouth is lovelier.(11.17-20,11)

But:

I dare not always touch her, lest her kiss
Leave my lips charred. Yea, Lord, a little bliss,
  Brief bitter bliss, one hath for a great sin;
Nathless thou knowest how sweet a thing it is. (11.169-172,17)

In this fashion Swinburne not only includes the natural perspective which Tannhäuser cannot quite achieve but also, at the same time, suggests the agonizing tensions caused by the unnatural and dualistic frame of mind (and captures the ambiguous and subtle shifts of any man's mind). Indeed, at one moment Tannhäuser is able to envision passionate love as the natural and "sweet fruit of life" from which he, like Tennyson's Tithonus, has been excluded:

There lover-like with lips and limbs that meet
They lie, they pluck sweet fruit of life and eat;
  But me the hot and hungry days devour,
And in my mouth no fruit of theirs is sweet. (11.97-100,14)

Commenting on these lines, Baird suggests that "Without carrying his thought to its logical conclusion, which would free him of his guilt, Tannhäuser can entertain the idea of Venus as a natural creature and therefore innocent, and only himself as stained and sinful"; yet, "While he is convinced of his own guilt, Tannhäuser cannot really believe in the possibility of an innocent sexuality for others."[156] Thus, for him all earthly love is ultimately considered soul-destroying lust and eternal damnation:

Sin, is it sin whereby men's souls are thrust
Into the pit? yet had I a good trust
  To save my soul before it slipped therein,
Trod under by the fire-shod feet of lust.

For if mine eyes fail and my soul takes breath
I look between the iron sides of death
  Into sad hell where all sweet love hath end,
All but the pain that never finisheth. (11.173-180,17)

This pattern is repeated on a larger scale in the last half of the poem (l. 209 and following) where Tannhäuser recounts his past life as a knight before he was caught up in the stifling heat of lust and hell which is his Venusberg:

> Let me think yet a little; I do know
> These things were sweet, but sweet such years ago,
> Their savour is all turned now into tears;
> Yea, ten years since, where the blue ripples blow,
>
> The blue curled eddies of the blowing Rhine,
> I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and vine
> Touch my blood too, and sting me with delight
> Through all this waste and weary body of mine
>
> That never feels clear air; right gladly then
> I rode alone, a great way off my men,
> And heard the chiming bridle smite and smite,
> And gave each rhyme thereof some rhyme again[.] (ll.229-240, 19)

Although his life contained the "strife" of battle, it equally included "the long peace"

> Wherein we sat clothed softly, each man's hair
> Crowned with green leaves beneath white hoods of vair;
> The sounds of sharp spears at great tourneyings,
> The noise of singing in the late sweet air. (ll.276-280,21)

Throughout this remembrance of things past, images of natural fecundity, of "grass and vine," of "windy wheat" and "water-spring[s]" (ll. 234, 303 and 304; 21 and 22), are mingled with the adjective "sweet," used previously by Tannhäuser in his momentary vision of natural passion (ll. 97-100, quoted above). Such imagery continues on into Tannhäuser's recollection of his first meeting with Venus and evokes a life of natural love and freedom:

> A great elder-tree
> Held back its heaps of flowers to let me see
> The ripe tall grass, and one that walked therein,
> Naked, with hair shed over to the knee.
>
> She walked between the blossom and the grass;
> I knew the beauty of her . . . . (ll.305-310,22)

This passage recalls the poet-dreamer's vision of his lady in "A Ballad of Life," but Tannhäuser is unable to sustain or comprehend this image of existence. He sees through the eyes of the figures of Lust, Shame, and Fear instead. Even before he is Venus' lover, when he is still only Christ's knight, he evinces the kind of lustful cruelty which, as we have seen, Swinburne links with Christianity. As McGann notes, immediately after the passage in which he remembers riding alone and joyfully in the "clear air" (l. 237), he recalls slaying a heathen knight:

> Remembering with relish his bloody exploits as a crusader against the heathen, Tannhäuser unconsciously lays bare a careless cruelty toward others which is only the image of the way he deals with himself. The passage climaxes in the horrible description of the slaying of the red-bearded "knave":
>
> The slaying of him was a joy to see:
> Perchance too, when at night he came not back,
>
> Some woman fell a-weeping, whom this thief
> Would beat when he had drunken; yet small grief
> Hath any for the ridding of such knaves;
> Yea, if one wept, I doubt her teen was brief.[157]

Correspondingly, the passage in which Tannhäuser recalls his first encounter with Venus "climaxes" with a reassertion of the Christian perspective:

> I knew the beauty of her, what she was,
> The beauty of her body and her sin,
> And in my flesh the sin of hers, alas! (ll.310-312,22)

From his perspective, union with her becomes one of lustful but "fruitless flowers" (l. 328, 22). He sees himself as bound in the "barren bowers" (l. 325, 22) of Venus until God will break his chains and "save [his] soul" (l. 331, 23).

In the next part of this recollection he relives the ride to Rome to "purge" his soul and recreates his accompanying mood of hopeful anticipation. Once again, the adjective "sweet" recurs: Rome is "the sweet land where all airs are good" (l. 347, 23), God's earthly representative is "the sweet-souled father" (l. 352, 23), and Christ's redemptive "blood [is] right sweet" (l. 354, 24). But the symbolic rod of the Pope does not blossom forth with sweet grace and mercy for Tannhäuser:[158]

> "Until this dry shred staff, that hath no whit
> Of leaf nor bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,
>   Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,
> For so long shalt thou be cast out from it." (ll. 369-372,24)

Tannhäuser, convinced of his sin, expects the same unforgiving treatment he gave the pagan knight and accepts the Pope's pronouncement as inevitable:

> Nay, though sweet fruit were plucked of a dry tree,
> And though men drew sweet waters of the sea,
>   There should not grow sweet leaves on this dead stem,
> This waste wan body and shaken soul of me. (ll. 377-380,25)

This imagery of fruitlessness culminates in the phrase "barren heaven" (l. 413, 26); this phrase not only recalls the "flowerless fields of heaven" in Atalanta but also the "barren bowers" of Venus in "Laus Veneris" itself, and perhaps implies that both the religion of the soul alone and the religion of the body alone are fruitless.

Tannhäuser now returns to Venus,who, unlike God, receives him in her embrace. For a moment, once again it seems as if Tannhäuser will emancipate himself from his dualistic conception of existence. He says that he came home to his "own soul's heart" (l. 368, 25) and "forgot fear and all weary things, /All ended prayers and perished thanksgivings" (ll. 401-402, 26). Yet, we are but back to where his reverie began. Venus is still only the "body," and union with her is at the cost of his soul. Soul and body are fused here (l. 394, 25), but such union is only in the stifling flames of hell and is still conceived of as a defiant act for which he will be punished even further. At the end of the poem Tannhäuser is but awaiting the last apocalyptic judgment of God:

> For till the thunder in the trumpet be,
> Soul may divide from body, but not we
>   One from another; I hold thee with my hand,
> I let mine eyes have all their will of thee,
>
> I seal myself upon me with my might,
> Abiding alway out of all men's sight
>   Until God loosen over sea and land
> The thunder of the trumpets of the night. (ll. 417-427,26)[159]

Other poems in the volume also have speakers who manifest the same inverted asceticism which is the result of a belief in the supremacy of the soul over the body and which causes the perversion of the natural celebration of the body (as equally divine) into a degradation of it. This perspective is held by the speaker of "Faustine" -- even though he is more emancipated than is Tannhäuser. Like de Sade, the speaker revels in the sensual beauty of Faustine and keenly appreciates her vampire-like cruelty:

> She loved the games men played with death,
>   Where death must win;
> As though the slain man's blood and breath
>   Revived Faustine.
>
> Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
>   Lithe limbs and lean
> From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat
>   To soothe Faustine.[160]

But the dualism of the speaker's attitude is clearly revealed in the poem. Faustine, the symbol of man's attitude towards the beauty of the flesh and sensual pleasures, is seen to have been won by Satan:

>   the devil threw dice with God
> For you, Faustine.
>
> Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
>   Stood blind between;

God said "let him that wins her take
  And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt;
  Long since, I ween
God's part in you was battered out;
  Long since, Faustine. (ll. 19-28,106-107)

The speaker also makes the suggestion that Faustine was made by Satan "to spite God" (l. 53, 108), or that she is the instrument of God meant to "scourge . . . /Our sins"(ll. 55 and 56, 108) -- both ideas reflecting Tannhäuser's attitude to Venus. The persona of the poem does, however, make the suggestion that the successively-incarnated Faustine has become increasingly barren throughout the years. Here images of original Bacchic fecundity -- of "flower-like lips" (l. 103, 109) and of the "vine's wet green" (l. 106, 110) -- give way to those of sterility -- of "kisses without fruit" (l. 131, 110) and "sexless root" (l. 129, 110) -- once the concept of "Hell's iron gin" (l. 122, 110) has been introduced into history. Indeed, this transformation from fertility to sterility culminates in an image of pure mechanism:

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
  A love-machine
With clockwork joints of supple gold --
  No more, Faustine. (ll. 141-144,111)

This image seems to capture perfectly the Victorian concept of sexuality, and it would not be entirely unjust to suggest that the poem is Swinburne's "Jenny." His own comments on the poem seem to support such an interpretation. First of all, referring to the fact that the poem occasioned no outcry when it was first published in the Spectator in 1862, he uses the same imagery of barrenness to describe the sudden moral reaction to the poem: "Virtue . . . has shot up surprisingly in the space of four years or less -- a rank and rapid growth barren of blossom and rotten at root." Secondly, his comments on the implications of the poem itself support both the idea that the transformed and degraded Faustine is man's changing image of the beauty and significance of the flesh and the idea that the beholder is a representative of modern man:

> 'Faustine' is the reverie of a man gazing on the bitter and vicious loveliness of a face as common and cheap as the morality of reviewers, and dreaming of past lives in which this fair face may have held a nobler or fitter station . . . .[161]

Finally, the poem itself ends with the question as to what Faustine would do were she loved with a "real love" (l. 149, 111) -- one presumably that is neither "[m]aimed" nor "mean" (l. 138, 111) but based on the recognition of the inextricable link between body and soul or "sense and spirit":

> You'd give him -- poison shall we say?
> Or what, Faustine? (ll. 163-164, 112)

These final lines are usually read as the speaker's anticipation of the cruelty which he would receive at her hands if he were to love her with a full-blooded love (and, indeed, they may be read as such, as the speaker retains his dualistic perspective and only longs for an encounter with her in a "fitter station," at the height of her imperial lust and cruelty); however, once again, by the skilful use of imagery and implication, Swinburne has introduced a perspective other than the persona's own.

Swinburne also indicates in his Notes on Poems and Reviews that "Faustine" is related to "Dolores" and that both are "distinctly symbolic."[162] In both poems we have the same image of the woman with "heavy white limbs" and "cruel," "venomous" mouth.[163] And the lineage of both figures is much the same: Faustine's "lord" is Priapus, the "Lampsacene," (l. 146, 111), the god of sexuality and of gardens who in later mythology is a symbol only of lust; and Dolores' parents are Priapus and Libitina (ll. 51-52, 156), the goddess of love and death who is identified by the speaker only with Death (l. 423, 167).[164] Dolores (and therefore Faustine as well) is also identified with Venus, particularly when the speaker recalls those Roman worshippers who "hailed thee re-arisen, O Thalassian, /Foam-white, from the foam" (ll. 223-224, 161). Swinburne is, however, more accurate in his mythology than this: Venus is actually presented as the mother of Priapus -- and Bacchus as his father (ll. 313-320, 164). Dolores is therefore the descendant of Venus -- Venus "re-arisen." She is that aspect of Venus which has survived through the ages. Once again, as in "Faustine," we have the idea that through her successive reincarnations "spirit" has been "sundered" from "clay" (l. 322, 164) and she has become the symbol of "All the joys of the flesh, all the sorrows /That wear out the soul" (ll. 15-16, 154).[165] All that is left of Venus is cruelty and barrenness, lust and death. She is, then, the "diabolic" Venus of Tannhäuser, or, as the Notes themselves suggest, "the darker Venus, fed with burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice."[166]

It is the Christian Mary who has taken over the fruitful and benevolent aspects of the Great Mother. In lines 329 to 360 (164-165) the speaker of the poem recounts the assumption of the powers of Cybele by the "new-born" Mary (l. 336, 165), and parallels the procession of the Phrygian goddess from Ida and "[o]ut of Dindymus" (l. 333 and 345, 165) into Rome with the eventual triumph of the Christian goddess.[167] Once again, Swinburne demonstrates his knowledge of myth and uses it for "distinctly symbolic" purposes. The two goddesses do have much in common. Both are worshipped by ascetic priests who undergo fasts of self-denial (l. 329-332, 164); both are called the Mother of God or the gods; more specifically, both are the virgin mothers of sons who die and are resurrected.[168] The replacement of the worship of the Great Mother by Mary was also facilitated by the connection of the cult of Cybele with that of Mithras; the affinities between Mithraism and Christianity have, of course, often been examined.[169] Swinburne may have been familiar with the similarities between Christianity and the chief pagan religions of Rome through his study of Julian the Apostate, who figures in the "Hymn to Proserpine." Emperor Julian (to whom Swinburne would have been drawn not only because of Julian's opposition to Christianity but also because of his love of freedom and hatred of the tyranny of previous Emperors[170]) was initiated into both the mysteries of Cybele and the cult of Mithras and wrote famous orations to both the Great Mother and the Sun God.[171] Swinburne's indication that the Christian goddess "wasted with fire" (l. 353, 165) the temples of her pagan counterpart may be a reference to the famous burning of the temple at Daphne by the Christians during Julian's reign.[172]

At the same time, the poem indicates that the worship of Mary exaggerates certain aspects of the worship of Cybele. The lions who bear the new goddess out of Dindymus are "bound and unfed" (l. 346, 165); similarly, the religion of Mary is identified with restriction, with the "creeds that refuse and restrain" (l. 278, 163). Particularly emphasized are the creeds of virginity and marriage (ll. 157-160, 159), the refusal of those who maintain a pure relationship with the transcendent Godhead and the restraint of those who work within the moral laws of Christian custom. Mary is identified with virginity and virtue, whereas the orgiastic and terrifying aspects of the original cult of Cybele are all that is left for Dolores, the incarnation of Venus.[173] Ironically, however, both the religion of the body alone and the religion of the soul alone are seen as cruel and barren;[174] once again, as in "Laus Veneris," this may be explained by examining the perspective of the speaker himself.

The speaker of "Dolores" seems to be more emancipated than either the speaker of "Faustine" or "Laus Veneris": he deliberately renounces the "creeds that refuse and restrain" and the "gods that constrain . . . and curse" (l. 148, 159) and just as deliberately revels in a religion of the body and bodily lusts alone:

> Ah beautiful passionate body
>   That never has ached with a heart!
> On thy mouth though the kisses are bloody,
>   Though they sting till it shudder and smart,
> More kind than the love we adore is,
>   They hurt not the heart or the brain,
> O bitter and tender Dolores,
>   Our Lady of Pain. (ll. 80-88, 157)

His religion is that of pain: "O lips full of lust and of laughter, /Curled snakes that are fed from my breast, /Bite hard, lest remembrance come after" (ll. 25-29, 155). And of sterility: "Of barren delights and unclean, /Things monstrous and fruitless, a pallid /And poisonous queen" (ll. 62-64, 156). The speaker is quite willing to accept pain and sterility as the sole province of his Lady. The same dualism of body and soul, evil and good is at work here, and the speaker quite definitely accepts his love of Dolores as evil and sin. His is merely an inversion of optimism, as he proclaims evil and sin as primary and triumphant. This inversion is reflected in the speaker's description of Dolores: he gives her the attributes of Mary in diabolical form. Dolores is "Notre-Dame des Sept Doleurs":

Seven sorrows the priests give their virgin;
  But thy sins, which are seventy times seven,
Seven ages would fail thee to purge in,
  And then they would haunt thee in heaven[.](ll. 9-12, 154)

In the next stanza she is described in imagery which reflects the Litany of the Blessed Virgin:

O tower not of ivory, but builded
  By hands that reach heaven from hell;
O mystical rose of the mire,
  O house not of gold but of gain[.](ll. 19-22, 154)

Similarly, when he describes his initiation into her cult (ll. 129-136, 158), he echoes the rites of the Black Mass as it is described by de Sade.[175]

The attitude of the persona of this poem is most like de Sade's; in fact, the speaker proclaims himself to be a follower of the great "prophet," and even attempts to go beyond him in sin and perversion.[176] That de Sade has only inverted Rousseauistic optimism is definitely suggested in the following lines:

  Thou shalt live until evil be slain,
And good shall die first, said thy prophet [de Sade],
  Our Lady of Pain. (ll. 374-376, 166)

That the speaker and his prophet have not achieved true emancipation is also indicated in the imagery of the next stanza:

Did he lie? did he laugh? does he know it,
  Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,
Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet,
  Sin's child by incestuous Death?
Did he find out in fire at his waking,
  Or discern as his eyelids lost light,
When the bands of the body were breaking
  And all came in sight? (ll. 377-384, 166)

As Swinburne maintains in his Notes, the speaker of "Dolores" "cries out for freedom and confesses the chain"[177] -- both in his conception of his Venus and in his "fear" of heavenly reprisal, which remains long after "shame" has gone. At the end of the poem, the speaker wonders why he "fear[s] overmeasure" and praises Dolores "with timorous breath" (l. 425 and 426, 168) and what will be in store for him after death:

> We shall know what the darkness discovers,
>   If the grave-pit be shallow or deep;
> And our fathers of old, and our lovers,
>   We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.
> We shall see whether hell be not heaven,
>   Find out whether tares be not grain,
> And the joys of thee seventy times seven,
>   Our Lady of Pain. (ll. 433-440, 168)

A second perspective common to several speakers in Poems and Ballads is the world-weary desire to escape from the troubles and transience of life entirely. Instead of being devoted to Venus and the "roses of vice," these speakers are dedicated to Proserpine and the "poppies of sleep."[178] As Swinburne suggests in his Notes, the "spirit" now, "without fear or hope of good things or evil, hungers and thirsts only after the perfect sleep."[179] The speaker of "The Garden of Proserpine," the second poem in Swinburne's "trilogy," is representative. He longs to abandon the arduous sea-journey of life and rest forever in the fields of Proserpine:

> I am weary of days and hours,
> Blown buds of barren flowers,
> Desires and dreams and powers
>   And everything but sleep.
>
> Here life has death for neighbour
>   And far from eye or ear
> Wan waves and wet winds labour,
>   Weak ships and spirits steer;
> They drive adrift, and whither
> They wot not who make thither;
> But no such winds blow hither,
>   And no such things grow here.[180]

Other speakers express the same sentiment in another Tennysonian metaphor: they desire to escape from the relentless "wave of the world"[181] by sinking down into the deep womb of the sea which is also the tomb:

> Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
> Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
> Those pure cold populous graves of thine
>   Wrought without hand in a world without stain.
>
> I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
>   Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
> My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
>   I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside[.][182]

This desire for "perfect sleep" is also present in "Laus Veneris": along with Tannhäuser's momentary vision of natural love (ll. 97-100, 14) is his desire for the release of natural death, expressed in images which combine these two image patterns:

> Ah yet would God this flesh of mine might be
> Where air might wash and long leaves cover me,
>   Where tides of grass break into foam of flowers,
> Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea. (ll. 53-56, 13)

Such an unconscious union with the forces of nature is, however, a fruitless hope for a Christian soul. As a Christian, Tannhäuser cannot hope for an escape into the oblivion of death, for he conceives of his soul as immortal and his punishments as eternal.[183] This contrast between the eternal deathlessness of Christianity and the "sleep eternal"[184] offered by the earlier religions is also presented in the final stanza of "Dolores."

As we have seen, Swinburne is himself in accord with those speakers who conceive of death in the pagan sense of sleep rather than eternal punishment or reward. In "The Pilgrims" of Songs before Sunrise, for instance, we have the same vision of death as a return to the primary forces of nature: those followers of the Goddess of earth and freedom who die in her service "Shall be a part of the earth and the ancient sea, /And heaven-high air august, and awful fire."[185] There is an essential difference here, however: as with Tannhäuser, most often the sentiments of the speakers of the poems in the Proserpine group are associated not with an acceptance of the natural vision of life and of the inevitable end of individual life but with a desire to escape from present actualities. In "The Garden of Proserpine" it is, significantly, a desire to escape from the unguided journey on the rough waves of existence. This journey is a central symbol in Songs before Sunrise and later works (and is already present in Atalanta) of the self-sufficient striving with the actualities of earth, time, and fate. It may be suggested, then, that Swinburne opposed not only the sterile quest for the unity of a heaven above the productive interaction of earth's contraries, but also the desire to seek the oblivious unity of a haven beneath the earth or the sea -- the wish to expire in the arms of the heavenly maiden, or in the arms of the Great Mother in her role as Proserpine.[186]

The *persona* of the "Hymn to Proserpine" clearly conceives of death as an escape from the painful actualities of life. Once again, these actualities are expressed in the image of the sea:

> mighty with deepening sides, clad about with the seas as with wings,
> And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled of unspeakable things,
> White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and serpentine-curled,
> Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the wave of the world.
> . . . .
> . . . .
> With light of ruin, and sound of changes, and pulse of years:
> With travail of day after day, and with trouble of hour upon hour;
> And bitter as blood is the spray; and the crests are as fangs that devour[.]
>
> (11. 51-54 and 58-60, 70)

The image is also that of the inevitable passing of time, and this is one of the reasons that the speaker longs for the changelessness of death. More specifically, however, time has brought the new gods of

Christianity to power, and the speaker finds the world now intolerable, although he does derive some satisfaction from the fact that they too will pass with time:

> Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will ye chasten the high sea with rods?
> Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is older than all ye Gods?
> All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass and be past;
> Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.
> In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in the changes of things,
> Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world shall forget you for kings.
> (11. 65-70, 70-71)

At the present time, however, the new king and queen have replaced Cybele and her consort. The speaker echoes the dying words of Emperor Julian: "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath" (1. 35, 69). And he contrasts the pale and virginal Mary (1. 81, 71) with the pagan queen. The Great Goddess is depicted here in the form of the fecund Venus, the "blossom of flowering seas" (1. 78, 71). But the speaker has himself given up the worship of Venus -- and of Bacchus (11. 5-6, 67) and Apollo, who is a "bitter God to follow" (1. 8, 67) -- and celebrates only the other daughter or aspect of the Great Goddess, Proserpine. His resignation and desire for death is much like that of Empedocles, who is also weary of Apollo's music and finds him an "intolerably severe" god to follow.[187] Swinburne, as we have seen, found the suicidal attitude of Empedocles inexplicable and unacceptable.

In the poem itself, of course, there is no direct condemnation of the speaker's desire to escape from life. However, imagery of barrenness also predominates here and is contrasted with the fruitfulness of other aspects of the Great Goddess (here, with the figure of Venus and in "The Garden of Proserpine" with Demeter, "the earth, her mother, /The life of fruits and corn"[188]). Even though the speaker accepts the barrenness of the changeless fields of Proserpine, Swinburne does offer an alternative perspective for us to consider. Furthermore, he himself did not accept this resignation as the final resting-point of his philosophy: in the Notes on Poems and Reviews, he suggests that this perspective, like that of "Dolores," is not the final act in the "monodrame" of the "spirit" but only a "transient state of spirit through which a man may be supposed to pass." Both the "seeking refuge in those 'violent delights' which have 'violent ends,' in fierce and frank sensualities which at least profess to be no more than they are," and the hungering for the final refuge of "perfect sleep"[189] are reactions to the disappointment in love (and the dashing of the expectations accompanying love[190]) recorded in "The Triumph of Time"; and both are followed by the final movement of the spirit presented in "Hesperia." In the final poem in the "monodrame," the spirit achieves a perspective which is more realistic than that of the spirit in "The Triumph of Time" and less negative and fragmentary than the reactions of the spirit to disappointment in the Venus and Proserpine poems.

"The Triumph of Time" is as successful a handling of subtle shifts of thought and mood as is "Laus Veneris." The speaker himself, as he stands on the shore with his beloved for the last time,[191] compares his thoughts to the movement of the sea before him:

> My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled
> Round and round in a gulf of the sea;
> And still, through the sound and the straining stream,
> Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,
> The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
> And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free. (ll. 179-184, 40)

The speaker of this poem alternates between the "dream" of love for which he still longs and his interrelated reactions to the reality which he now faces.[192] His dream is that of those Romantics who conceive of love as the perfect union of souls (and of flesh) and elevate it to the status of a religion which redeems man and reveals his divinity. As the speaker says to his beloved,

> Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,
>   The wild new growth of the corn and the vine,
> This wine and bread without lees or leaven,
> We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,
> Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,
>   One splendid spirit, your soul and mine. (11. 27-32, 35)

Had she loved him, they would have been

> Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast
> Soul to soul while the years fell past[.] (11. 45-46, 35)

Johnson remarks that there are echoes of Epipsychidion throughout this section of the poem; his remark may be extended to suggest that here Swinburne captures the whole Romantic religion of love.[193] The fruitfulness of the image of the sacramental bread and wine in the passage above and the natural imagery in a later passage -- "I had [would have] grown pure as the dawn and the dew, /You had grown strong as the sun or the sea" (11. 153-154, 39) -- may suggest that Swinburne is presenting his own ideal of love. But there are indications throughout the poem that the speaker's expectations are much too idealistic, that they are an escape from the actualities of existence. The speaker imagines a fruitful paradise which is apart from "the change of years" and "the coil of things" (1. 33, 35) where he and his beloved would see "Grief collapse as a thing disproved, /Death consume as a thing unclean" (11. 43-44, 35),[194] where they would be protected by love "as a covering tree" and kept warm with the wings of the God of Love (11. 36 and 39, 35).

The speaker's dream of such perfect communion has been shattered by the woman herself. She moves in another realm entirely and has pledged herself to another man. Her realm is that of conventional religion, and she has resisted the serpent-voice who tempts her to step outside of its bounds and to become "as gods" (11. 30 and 37, 35; see Genesis 3:5).[195] She has accepted marriage with another man, has become the "flesh of his flesh" (1. 102, 37; see Genesis 2:23 and 24), and has decided on a "Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer" (1. 162, 39). If she repents in heaven, the speaker says to her, drawing a clear distinction between her religion and his, it will be too late: "The gate is strait; I shall not be there" (1. 168, 39; see Luke 13:24).

In her desire for purity within the conventions of marriage, this woman combines the impulses of Atalanta and Althaea.[196] She is the heavenly maiden in her conventional Victorian form. The image of the woman and the situation of the speaker are both reminiscent of Carlyle's Sartor Resartus and Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," which has itself been considered to be an adaptation of Teufelsdröckh's unsuccessful love affair.[197] The Romantic expectations of Teufelsdröckh can be compared to those of Swinburne's speaker, but Tennyson's poem offers many parallels in terms of imagery and situation. "Many an evening," says the speaker of Tennyson's poem, he stood with his beloved and watched the sea, "And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips." But now he stands alone and contemplates the "barren, barren shore" and the love that bore only "bitter fruit."[198] There is not the same direct condemnation of the husband and of the baser motives and lesser loves involved in many a marriage as there is in "Locksley Hall,"[199] but it is perhaps implicit in the speaker's scorn for

> The souls and lips that are bought and sold,
> The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,
> The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,
> The little lovers that curse and cry. (ll. 245-248, 42)

The "heavenly" aspect of the woman is emphasized in "The Triumph of Time" by the direct comparison of the speaker's love with that of Geoffrey Rudel. As Valency remarks, Rudel is the most idealistic of courtly lovers, and his lady is so distant that she is difficult to distinguish from the Blessed Virgin herself.[200] When the speaker accepts the fact that he cannot realize his ideal of communion and consummation, he adopts the stance of the courtly lover who would die for a word from his cruel lady;[201] and he envies Rudel, who obtained his "word" from his lady and died "praising God for his gift and grace" (l. 329, 45). The lover who expected to grow godlike with his beloved now says that he would have been willing to be the slave of his mistress and a martyr for love.

> I had [would have] wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
> Broken it up for your daily bread:
> Body for body and blood for blood,
> As the flow of the full sea risen to flood
> That yearns and trembles before it sink,
> I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead. (ll. 90-96, 37)

This is the aspect of love which Swinburne singles out when he suggests in his Notes that the "spirit" progresses from the "martyr's ardour of selfless love" to the state of the speaker in "Dolores,"[202] but the poem itself is also a rejection of Romantic optimism, as it is expressed in their religion of love, and of Victorian morality, as it is summed up in their ideal of marriage.

Forced to reject the first two types of love (the third he seems to consider to be outside the realm of passionate love entirely and, as we have seen, at least alludes to the restrictions and hypocrisies of marriage), the speaker moves at moments to a more realistic attitude to life -- or at least to one which is more in keeping with Swinburne's own perception of existence. At the beginning of the poem the persona imagines being "clothed warm" with the wings of Love (1. 39, 35); but at the end of the poem, he suggests that "Love that sings and hath wings as a bird" is "Balm of the wound and heft of the knife" (11. 371 and 372, 46). Similarly, he realizes that the "high gods" (1. 174, 39) are essentially indifferent to the desires of men:

> Do the high gods know or the great gods care?
> Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,
> Would the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,
> That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,
> Reverberate words and a foolish prayer? (11. 252-256, 42)

When "chance" (1. 48, 35 and 1. 161, 39) makes possible one's personal dreams, men like Rudel interpret their good fortune as a gift of the gods and praise them (11. 337-352, 45); but the seemingly less fortunate speaker realizes their actual indifference[203] and turns instead to his mother, the sea.

> I will go back to the great sweet mother,
> Mother and lover of men, the sea;
> I will go down to her, I and none other,
> Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;
> Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast:
> O fair white mother, in days long past
> Born without sister, born without brother,
> Set free my soul as thy soul is free. (11. 257-264, 42)

This passage is similar to Swinburne's own invocation to the White Goddess in "Mater Triumphalis," and she is given the same characteristics as Hertha. She is the triple-goddess, not only "mother and lover" but also the destroyer:

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
  Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say.
Thou hast taken, and shall not render again;
Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they. (ll. 289-292, 43)

She is the first principle and contains all opposites:

    thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
  From the first thou wert; in the end thou art. (ll. 300-304, 44)

There is, however, no definite movement in the poem like that which we have outlined, and no positive resolution on the part of the speaker himself. He does not advance from an idealistic conception of life to a more realistic one. He moves from the dream of perfect love (ll. 25-48, 35) to the reality of the sea (ll. 49-88, 35-36); but the sea is seen only as "a barren mother, a mother-maid, /Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers" (ll. 67-68, 36). He moves, as suggested above, from the "high gods," who are associated with the world of dreams and false hopes, to the Great Mother, who is now presented as both barren and fruitful; but the speaker desires only one aspect of her again -- the Great Mother as the goddess of death. He actually does not wish to "strive with her" (l. 261, 42) but only to "sleep" (l. 273, 43) beneath her waves:

Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of a thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine
  Wrought without hand in a world without stain. (ll. 269-272, 43)

When he turns from his beloved to the sea, then, the same pattern is actually repeated: the desire to "mix her with me" (l. 260, 42) is followed by a desire to die at her hands.[204] Finally, the speaker turns away from his mother the sea and back to his cruel mistress (ll. 381-384, 46) and envies Rudel, who dies with the blessing of his lady (ll. 321-352, 44-45). There is even an indication that he too would praise the gods if his lady would bestow a word.

The speaker does not achieve wholeness of vision or a positive attitude to the actualities of existence. His reactions are as fragmentary and negative as those of the speakers of the Venus and Proserpine poems. Indeed, there is an indication of the "acts" which follow "The Triumph of Time" in the poem itself. At moments when he accepts the impossibility of his love, the speaker maintains that he will "bury" his soul forever (ll. 198-224, 40-41) and indulge in those cruel lusts which, as the speaker of "Dolores" says, at least "hurt not the heart or the brain":

> I would find a sin to do ere I die,
> Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,
> That would set you higher in heaven, serve you
> And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,
> As a dead man out of mind, am I. (ll. 228-232, 41)[205]

Or, as we have seen, he manifests the same desire for the complete oblivion of death as the speaker of "The Garden of Proserpine." Death is the predominant desire of the speaker throughout the poem; it is prevalent not only in his reactions to the loss of love but also in his dream of love itself. He desires to bury his soul or to be buried, both body and soul, beneath the sea, and he desires to die at the command of his beloved or to achieve the perfect communion of love through death:

> I wish we were dead together today,
> Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,
> Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,
> Out of the world's way, out of the light
> Out of the ages of worldly weather,
> Forgotten of all men altogether,
> As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,
> Made one with death, filled full of the night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,
Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!
And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,
Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;
Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,
Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem
Alive as of old to the lips, and leap
Spirit to spirit as lovers use. ([illegible]. 113-128, 37-38)[206]

The diverse moods of the poem are united on the logical level by the fact that the speaker is responding with various emotions to the seascape before him[207] and on the psychological level by the various ways in which love is connected with death.

"The Triumph of Time" includes many of the negative attitudes to existence which Swinburne explores dramatically in other important early works. Central among these are, first of all, Romantic optimism, which ignores the darker aspects of reality, and Christian theism, which fragments it; and, secondly, incomplete reactions against these positions in the celebration of Venus and the religion of the body alone (which is still considered a sin) and in the desire for death in the arms of Proserpine. The results of all these attitudes are, however, similar: they all lead to some form of fragmentation of the self, desire to escape from the full realities of existence, and barrenness -- to division, denial, death. It may be suggested that the speakers of these central works all worship only one aspect of the Great Goddess -- the heavenly, the earthly, or the underworld aspect alone. The heavenly aspect of the Goddess appears only in the background of Poems and Ballads, as Mary, "la belle dame sans merci" of the courtly love tradition, or the pure Victorian maiden, but she is central to Atalanta in Calydon in the form of the Artemis principle (worshipped by Meleager as Atalanta).[208] Venus as the earthly and Proserpine as the underworld aspect of the Great Goddess are central to the volume.[209] At the same time, Swinburne employs the remaining mythological similarities of these goddesses in order to suggest the similar results of an exclusive dedication to one of them. Mary, as we have seen, is strongly linked with Proserpine in "Dolores";[210] Venus also merges with Proserpine in the form of "Venus Libitina, goddess of love and death."[211] Swinburne's comments on the "Hymn to Proserpine," which he contrasts with the "Hymn of Man" as the "deathsong of spiritual decadence and the birthsong of spiritual renascence,"[212] may be applied to the Venus poems as well. Both groups of poems present attitudes to life which are not only fragmented and barren but also associated with death. It is Nietzsche who not only directly draws together the transcendent impulses of Christian, Platonic, or idealistic philosophies but also associates the reactions against them in the pessimism of weakness or decadence with the reassertion of the same impulse in the related forms of voluptuous drowning or frenzy and ascetic denial or renunciation.[213] But Swinburne suggests much the same thing in his symbolic use of the figure of the woman.[214] We see both of these reactions in the decadents who followed him and were influenced by his expression of these attitudes -- often even a return to Rome, often expressed as a desire for mystical union with the heavenly maiden.

Many of Swinburne's disciples and critics have not noted the significance of the fact that the Venus and Proserpine poems are followed by "Hesperia,"[215] the final act in the "monodrame" of the spirit which may be compared to Nietzsche's pessimism of strength.[216] Here, the "worship of desire, . . . the mad commotion of sense" and the worship of death have both been overcome. The persona of this poem first recalls his previous enslavement to "Our Lady of Pain" and "Our

Lady of Sleep."[217] The two goddesses merge in his mind:

> Too soon did I love it, and lost love's rose; and I cared not for glory's:
>   Only the blossoms of sleep and of pleasure mixed in my hair.
> Was it myrtle or poppy thy garland was woven with, O my Dolores?
>   Was it pallor of slumber, or blush as of blood, that I found in thee fair?
> For desire is a respite from love, and the flesh not the heart is her fuel.
> (11. 53-57, 176)[218]

He then turns away from the dual "goddess who consumes" to Hesperia, the "goddess who redeems."[219] She is described in images which contrast significantly with the images of Venus and Proserpine in previous poems and suggest a fruitful recovery from the effect of these goddesses. Her bosom is as a "manifold flower" (1. 21, 174) and the "heart of the flower is compassion" (1. 43, 175); her eyes are "quiet," her hands "tender," and her lips "loving," and they "Comfort and cool [him] as dew in the dawn of a moon" (11. 25 and 26, 174).

Hesperia is one of the daughters of Hesperus who guard the golden apples in the sacred island in the west where the sun sets, one of the "daughters three /That sing about the golden tree" in Milton's Comus and Tennyson's "The Hesperides."[220] The names of these goddesses vary, as does the location of the island. Apollodorus, for instance, names Hesperia as one of these daughters, but he places the island in the far north among the Hyperboreans.[221] The myth of the Hesperides is often linked with that of the Fortunate Isles or the Elysian Fields (often even with Jason's quest for the golden fleece) in Greek mythology; and it has its counterpart in other mythologies, in the Celtic Isle of Avalon and the Sumerian tree of Innana, for instance.[222] Behind these diverse forms of the island-tree-snake myth is the central mystery of the Great Goddess.

In Swinburne's poem Hesperia is presented as the daughter of both Proserpine and Venus. Proserpine has groves sacred to her in the western extremity of earth,[223] and Hesperia, the "daughter of sunset and slumber" (l. 73, 177) comes to the speaker from "Out of the golden remote wild west" (l. 1, 173),

> From the bountiful infinite west, from the happy memorial places
> Full of the stately repose and lordly delight of the dead,
> Where the fortunate islands are lit with the light of ineffable faces,
> And the sound of the sea without wind is about them, and sunset is red[.]
> (ll. 33-36, 175)

As well, she is specifically named as the daughter of Venus:

> Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the wind from the west,
> Straight from the sunset, across white waves whence rose as a daughter
> Venus thy mother . . . . (ll. 10-12, 173)

Venus is closely linked with the myth of the Hesperides in her form as the planet which is Hesperus as the evening star and Phosphorus as the morning star.[224] As such, she is invoked in Tennyson's poem on the Hesperides: "Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth morn." More significantly, she is present in one of the central sections of In Memoriam, CXXI:

> Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
> For what is one, the first, the last,
> Thou, like my present and my past,
> Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

In this section of In Memoriam the poet has arrived at an awareness of the fact that day implies night and life implies death, at an acceptance of the fact that the contraries of existence are aspects of the one truth. Related in image and import is the earlier section, XCV, which is often considered the turning-point of the poem:

And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.[225]

The same sort of reconciliation of opposites is involved in Swinburne's poem. Even though Hesperia is associated with the sunset in the west, she is described in images linked with dawn: dawn is often depicted as a goddess with wings (see l. 10, 173) or drawn by horses (see l. 75 and following), and is associated with the wind (l. 10, 173) and the dew (l. 26, 174).[226] Indeed, Eos is often called Hespera when she has arrived with Helius in the west:

> At the close of every night . . . Eos . . . rises from her couch in the east, mounts her chariot drawn by the horses Lampsus and Phaëthon, and rides to Olympus, where she announces the approach of her brother Helius. When Helius appears, she becomes Hemara, and accompanies him on his travels until, as Hespera, she announces their safe arrival on the western shores of Ocean.[227]

Swinburne himself points to the paradoxical nature of Hesperia in his Notes on Poems and Reviews: "'Hesperia,' the tenderest type of woman or of dream, born on the westward 'islands of the blest,' . . . dawns upon his [the speaker's] eyes a western dawn, risen as the fiery day of passion goes down, and risen where it sank."[228] In this comment we also have an indication of the progress of the spirit in Swinburne's "monodrame": like the sun, the spirit moves from "fiery . . . passion" (Venus) to oblivion beneath the waves (Proserpine), but rises again in a more positive attitude to existence (Hesperia), one that derives wisdom from the previous experiences and includes the negative aspects of existence in its vision. It may be suggested that Swinburne decided not to link his poems as a "trilogy" not only because other poems were acts in the same play but also because the poems present this process at the same time as they analyze the specific causes for the individual speakers' inability to accept the whole nature of existence.

Hesperia's redemptive qualities and her association with a kind of earthly paradise have perhaps led Morse Peckham to dismiss the poem as a return to the "transcendental concept" of love of the Romantic period.[229] However, Hesperia's lineage and the movement of the poem itself indicate that this is not a return to the idealistic conception of love explored in "The Triumph of Time" and Atalanta in Calydon but an advance from the equally self-destructive attitudes to experience put forward in the Venus and Proserpine poems and the achievement of a kind of pessimism of strength. The speaker's love for or attachment to Hesperia does not create an earthly paradise, nor does it involve an escape from the contraries of existence. Instead, Hesperia comes to him from out of the blessed isles, and on a dark and stormy night they ride together through the landscape of life, one which includes places of passion and peril, sorrow and sterility:

> Let us take to us, now that the white skies thrill with a moon unarisen,
> Swift horses of fear or of love, take flight and depart and not die.
> They are swifter than dreams, they are stranger than death; there is none that hath ridden
> None that shall ride in the dim strange ways of his life as we ride;
> By the meadows of memory, the highlands of hope, and the shore that is hidden,
> Where life breaks loud and unseen, a sonorous invisible tide;
> By the sands where sorrow has trodden, the salt pools bitter and sterile,
> By the thundering reef and the low sea-wall and the channel of years,
> Our wild steeds press on the night, strain hard through pleasure and peril,
> Labour and listen and pant not or pause for the peril that nears;
> . . . .
> . . . .
> And our spirits too burn as we bound, thine holy but mine heavy-laden,
> As we burn with the fire of our flight; ah love, shall we win at the last? (ll. 75-84 and 92-93, 177-178)

This passage captures an attitude to existence which may be called a positive pessimism or a qualified optimism. The speaker's positive pessimism is suggested not only by the central night-dawn imagery but also by the fact that he takes up horses of "fear" and "love," that he rides with the goddess who redeems but is pursued by the dual goddess who destroys, that the spirit of his goddess is "holy"[230] but his "heavy-laden." If the goddess who destroys is associated with his previous self-destructive attitude to existence, Hesperia is what remains of his original optimistic conception of life, associated here, as in "The Triumph of Time," with the world of dream. She comes out of the west on the wind from the "region of stories" which "Blows with a perfume of songs and of memories beloved from a boy" (ll. 3 and 4, 173), from "the happy memorial places" (l. 33, 175) where the dead sleep. She is like "a dream that abides after slumber" (l. 13, 174), "as a ghost rearisen /Pale as the love that revives as a ghost rearisen" in him (ll. 31 and 32, 175). But she is now "not a dream" (l. 23, 174). She is real in the sense that she remains after the speaker has experienced the harsher truths of life, that she rides with him through the world of reality, and that she rides along beside his own remaining fear and doubt. She is optimism qualified.

Thus, even though Hesperia is described in images that recall those associated with the Romantics' ideal woman, the attitude toward existence depicted in this central passage of the poem may be contrasted with the Elysian state of mind and existence put forward, for instance, in Shelley's Epipsychidion on an individual level and in his Prometheus Unbound on a cosmic scale. It is also quite different from the desire to escape from the stormy waves of the world to a paradisiacal island presented in such poems as Tennyson's "The

Lotus-Eaters" (which is related in imagery to "The Hesperides") or in Swinburne's own "The Garden of Proserpine."[231] It should be compared to the attitude of striving with the stern actualities of existence which is presented in Songs before Sunrise in the metaphor of swimming in the sea. Here the metaphor of riding with Hesperia has the same strength and virility (and perhaps sexual overtones[232]) as the image in Songs before Sunrise. The central metaphor put forward in the title of the volume is also present in "Hesperia," as we have seen. In Songs before Sunrise "striking out for the dawn" has political implications, but, as McGann also suggests, it is primarily a symbol of the individual's achievement of the state of mind which makes the universal Republic a possible conception. It may be suggested that in "Hesperia" Swinburne presents on an individual level what he presents on a cosmic scale in "Hertha."

That the "spirit" of "Hesperia" has achieved a knowledge of Hertha, the Great Goddess who is behind Venus and Proserpine, her daughters, and Hesperia, their daughter, is suggested by the fact that the symbols in this final poem are similar not only to those in Songs before Sunrise but also to those which are involved in the process of the reintegration of the psyche or the rebirth of the hero outlined by Jung and Joseph Campbell.[233] Behind the poem is the archetypal journey of the hero to the Great Goddess, source of creation and destruction. He, like the sun, travels to the source of existence in the west, sinks into the womb and the tomb of the Great Mother, and is born again. Hertha, as we have seen, has her sacred grove on an island in the sea, and is identified by Swinburne with the Tree of Existence and the sea, both primary symbols of the Great Goddess.[234]

And Hesperia, who comes out of this island and over the sea, is associated with the primary symbols of the release of the energy of the psyche -- with bird and wind (1. 10, 173), and with flame and arrow (1. 92 and 85, 178).[235] Her opposite, the snake woman, is the demonic aspect of the Great Goddess, the dangers of destruction and regression which must be faced and continually overcome.[236] The central metaphor of riding horses[237] with Hesperia may be seen as a symbol of the reintegration of the psyche, of the ego and the unconscious and of man and the energies of nature. It does capture the "feeling of being caught up in the creative process" and the "sense of risking exposure to forces beyond one's control" that Anna Belford Ulanov links with the "transformative" symbol of the woman.[238]

Finally, it may be affirmed that the process described by Swinburne in the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise is complete in Poems and Ballads itself. The first stanza of the poem ("Between the green bud and the red") presents the initial hopes and dreams of Youth; the second stanza ("Between the bud and the blown flower") describes how the wind has scattered "The rose-red and the blood-red leaf" not of love now but of "Delight whose germ grew never grain, /And passion dyed in its own pain."[239] The succeeding stanzas describe how Youth puts aside "dreams of bitter sleep and sweet" for freedom and strength:

> His heart is equal with the sea's
> And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
> Is level to the speech of these,
> And his soul communes and takes cheer
> With the actual earth's equalities,
> Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
> And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

In the concluding stanzas of the poem, the divinity of the soul is presented and the journey through life guided by its light is described:

> Because man's soul is man's God still
> Whatever wind soever waft his will
>   Across the waves of day and night
>   To port or shipwreck, left or right,
> By shores and shoals of good and ill;
>   And still its flame at mainmast height
> Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
>   Sustains the indomitable light
> Whence only man has strength to steer
> Or helm to handle without fear.
> Save his own soul's light overhead,
> None leads him, and none ever led,
>   Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
>   Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
> Through age that drives on toward the red
>   Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
> To the equal waters of the dead[.][240]

This passage is related in imagery and import to riding with Hesperia.

Many of Swinburne's poems in volumes subsequent to Songs before Sunrise present the individual's acceptance of the truths of Hertha which is symbolized in this final "act" in the "monodrame" of Poems and Ballads by riding through life with Hesperia. There are many similarities in image and import between "Hesperia" and Swinburne's later "nature poems," even though the symbol of riding is not a central one in these poems, and the symbol of the woman is not so directly employed. The central image patterns are, instead, those which were outlined in Chapter II in terms of Songs before Sunrise. The most important of these image patterns is the individual's swim in the sea, his personal encounter with the aspects of Hertha and his achievement of Hesperian vision.

Chapter IV: HESPERIA

In Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry, Wendell Stacy Johnson notes Swinburne's "preoccupations with erotic love and death" and places him with those poets for whom liebestod is the expression of a desire for the annihilation of the separate self and the achievement of absolute unity.[1] Marriage, he suggests, is rejected by Swinburne not only because of its connections with the rules and restrictions of Christianity but also because of its symbolic implications of creative interchange. Swinburne's ideal is not marriage but "merger, a total and mystical oneness that is, so to speak, self-consuming." To Johnson, this is the essence of Swinburne:

> his poetry suggests that sexual consummation is fully achieved in a virtually mystical, perhaps humanly impossible, experience that transcends the sexual individuality of male and female, of person and person, as it transcends the dialectic of time, the illusion of seasonal change.[2]

This essential idea is illuminated by "Hermaphroditus," a poem which (as was also suggested in Chapter III) involves a contrast between absolute unity, symbolized by the figure of the hermaphrodite, and a "harmonious relating or partial union of still distinct persons or elements." Johnson also notes that unity is associated by Swinburne with barrenness, that it results in the "waste wedlock of a sterile kiss"; yet he concludes that: "In the profound sterility which is oneness, not in fruitfulness and the dialectic of sex, of time, Swinburne finds truth."[3]

Johnson considers Atalanta in Calydon to be the first full expression of this truth and to be concerned primarily with the contrast between unity and division. He is correct when he suggests that doubleness and division predominate in the play and pertain not only to nature but also to the characters themselves, "who, being mortal, seem painfully divided between soul and body, between life and death, while they seek the divine truth of Unity, a unity that means death to the individual." He is also correct when he suggests that this search is particularly manifested in Meleager's love for Atalanta, which he links with "worship" and "sacrifice," and "death and self-immolation."[4] He is, however, incorrect when he identifies Meleager's conception of truth with Swinburne's own. The same criticism may be made of his analysis of the same desire, or "pattern" as he calls it, in Poems and Ballads, and of the essentially similar impulse to return to the "primal unity" of the Great Mother -- to sleep beneath the sea -- which is expressed when such a love as Meleager's is frustrated.[5]

Johnson's treatment of Swinburne's ideas is representative of that of those critics who consider the essence of the poet to be the desire for death in the arms of the heavenly maiden or the Great Mother -- and, indeed, is a perceptive treatment of what should, instead, be considered Swinburne's analysis of this impulse. Like such critics, Johnson also tends to overlook the dramatic and exploratory nature of most of Swinburne's early works, and to slight the connection between what may be considered the "overpoem" or overview of Poems and Ballads and the more direct vision of Songs before Sunrise. He also and most specifically ignores "Hesperia," which completes the "pattern" and establishes the controlling perspective of the central poems of Poems and Ballads, and the implications of those poems of volumes subsequent to Songs before Sunrise that confirm the pattern culminating in "Hesperia." These later poems focus on the moment of the individual's acceptance of the truth of Nature or capture the spirit of his joyful striving with her.[6] Here the sexual metaphor does not imply a desire for ecstatic death or voluptuous drowning -- although there is a sense in which the moment involves and the celebration includes an acceptance of death and darkness and dissolution -- but, instead, indicates a communing with Hertha and an embracing of her truth on the part of the individual man.

The poems concerning man's relationship with natural truth form a major group in Swinburne's later verse. The best of them, particularly "The Lake of Gaube" and "A Nympholept," two poems which Swinburne himself singled out as well-written and representative works,[7] have received considerable critical attention in recent years; this attention, it may be added, is an indication that critics have begun to move from the analysis of the sado-masochism, the *femme fatale*, and the Pre-Raphaelite and French connections of the early Swinburne to a more comprehensive consideration of his work. There have been not only some general treatments of Swinburne's "nature poetry" and several detailed interpretations of the best of these poems but also studies of the poetic method manifested in them.

More characteristic of Swinburne's style than the more Pre-Raphaelite delineation of details in such early works as "Faustine" is the blurring of outlines which predominates in the later poetry and which Eliot comments on in *The Sacred Wood*. In Swinburne's verse, Eliot notes, the fixed object has virtually ceased to exist, emotions are not delineated in a precise and concentrated fashion, and the internal and the external tend to be mingled. He describes Swinburne's verse as a diffused "mixture" of "images and ideas and music."[8] To Eliot, it is a somewhat unsettling mixture, one which tends to give the reader only the "hallucination of meaning": he notes first of all that the words are detached from their referents in the real world and that the poetry therefore forms an independent and artificial world of its own, and, second of all, that the poetry "appears to be a tremendous statement, like the statements made in our dreams."[9] Earlier critics had made much the same observations: Thomas, for instance, points to the characteristic combination or confusion of "the physical and the spiritual world," Symons to the mixture of the abstract and the concrete, and Pound to the "emotional fusion of perceptions" in Swinburne's poetry;[10] and criticisms of Swinburne's wordiness and meaninglessness were common once the initial concern with his immorality was less pervasive. But most modern critics have Eliot's somewhat "ambiguous pronouncements"[11] specifically in mind when they take up the question of Swinburne's style.

Some recent critics have added significantly to Eliot's analysis of Swinburne's use of language and the effect of his verse. Rosenberg, for instance, notices in Swinburne's poetry not only what Symons called the mixing of the concrete and the abstract, but also the general and slight dislocation of words from their habitual meaning and their usual placement in stock phrases and normal sentences.[12] Swinburne's verse, he maintains, is not "diffuse" if "vague" is meant by the term: Swinburne uses words in a precise fashion and in order to achieve the effect of "sustained harmony" or enveloping atmosphere.[13] The atmosphere is strange because of this "gentle dislocation of words," as well as of Swinburne's "insistent, mesmeric metres," and is much like the atmosphere of dreams.[14] Other critics subsequent to Eliot more directly defend the creation of what Empson has called the poetry of "Atmosphere," and Richards, "elusive poetry,"[15] against the charges of the "new critics" and, most importantly, also justify Swinburne's style by pointing to its correspondence with his essential philosophy. Lougy, for example, suggests that critical standards which allow only for poetry which is urbane, witty, concentrated, and ironic are unjustifiably narrow,[16] and he also attempts to show that Swinburne's style is in keeping with his conceptions of the relationship between man and nature.

The characteristics of Swinburne's style which Rosenberg points out are present to some extent even in his early works. Rosenberg, for instance, aptly analyzes Swinburne's creation of "sustained harmony" in the early poem "The Garden of Proserpine": the poem "illustrates Swinburne's mastery of the music of enervation; the blurring, genetic plurals, the muted imagery, and the feminine rhymes all evoke the pause of being 'when the spirit, without fear or hope . . . thirsts after perfect sleep.'"[17] But the characteristics are particularly noticeable and significant to the later -- and more difficult -- "nature poems."

As a nature poet, Swinburne is also of the Church of Shelley -- one which, to return to Lougy's observations, has not had many devotees in post-Romantic poetry or criticism. The problem is that Shelley does not delineate the object in the precise fashion of Donne or, among the Romantics themselves, Keats.[18] Instead, he most often presents the elemental forces of nature in motion and transformation and most characteristically achieves in his poetry a sense of the emotional participation of the perceiving subject in these elemental forces. Neville Rogers suggests that in this respect Shelley has actualized Coleridge's definition of poetic "genius": Shelley makes the "internal external, . . . Nature thought, and thought Nature."[19] Swinburne had suggested much the same thing when he objected to Arnold's remark that Keats "renders Nature" and Shelley "tries to render her." Shelley, Swinburne argues, does not attempt to produce a "sculpture[d] . . . painting after the life of natural things. . . . His aim is rather to render the effect of a thing than the thing itself; the soul and spirit of life rather than the living form, the growth rather than the thing grown."[20] These comments on Keats in the "Notes on the Text of Shelley" (1869) are in keeping with Swinburne's earlier remarks on the Romantic poet in "Matthew Arnold's New Poems" (1867), in which he suggests that Keats was "more than all other poets receptive and passive to her [Nature's] influences and forces" and was able in his poetry to "transfigure them without transformation."[21] They are also repeated in "Keats" (1882), in which he defines the essence or "distinctive . . . power" of Keats as the "deep and cunning instinct for the absolute expression of absolute natural beauty."[22]

In most of his remarks, Swinburne suggests only that Keats' aim was different from Shelley's. Indeed, in the "Notes" to Shelley's poetry, he maintains that Keats is as "unapproachable" in his field of painting nature with "exquisite contraction and completeness," "round and perfect limit," as Shelley is in his.[23] However, in "Wordsworth and Byron" (1884), written again with Arnold's estimate of the Romantic poets in mind, Swinburne clearly indicates his own preference.

In the poetry of Keats, "there is a singular intensity, a matchless refinement, of relish for the pure delight of communion with natural beauty . . . ." And in the poetry of Wordsworth, "[t]here is much study, there is much knowledge, there is much sober and sedate enjoyment of nature, much deep and thoughtful thankfulness for such enjoyment." But only Shelley rises beyond the "regions" of "sensation" and "contemplation" into the realm

> where the emotion of Keats and the emotion of Wordsworth become one, and are superseded by a greater; to breathe, in Shakespeare's audaciously subtle and successful phrase, the very "spirit of sense" itself, to transcend at once the sensuous and meditative elements of poetry, and to fuse their highest, . . . their most inward and intimate effects, in such verse as utters what none before could utter, and renders into likeness of form and sound such truths of inspired perception, such raptures of divine surprise, as no poet of nature may think to render again.[24]

Swinburne had drawn essentially the same distinction as early as 1866: in his "Byron," he says that Keats describes the forms of Nature and Wordsworth uses her for "didactic purposes," but Shelley and Byron both render the emotional effect of the forces of Nature. Only in their poetry does "description melt[] into passion and contemplation take[] fire from delight."[25]

In such remarks, the distinction which Swinburne draws among the Romantic poets of nature seems to involve more than just a personal preference. Indeed, the language with which he describes Shelley recalls that with which he defines the "internal music" of the creative artist, and the implication seems to be that Keats, with his emphasis on sense, and Wordsworth, with his emphasis on spirit, have not achieved that "absolute fusion of the whole nature in one fire of sense and spirit" by which (if it is expressed with "external music") perfect "harmony" in art is achieved.[26] This suggestion is in accord with Swinburne's criticism of Wordsworth as a poet whose primary concern with inward truth often meant that he worked with a preconceived idea and therefore wrote "didactic" poetry,[27] and his less explicit criticism of Keats as a poet whose focus on the outward form of things often meant that his poetry lacked human emotion or the "breath of human life."[28] However, there are different types of "internal music," which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, is the "native impulse" or characteristic temperament of the poet. And Swinburne does admit that on occasion Wordsworth's "contemplation" does take "fire from delight" and therefore that he does achieve unsurpassed excellence in his own field of "natural contemplation";[29] similarly, Swinburne does suggest that Keats' "description" sometimes does "melt[] into passion" and therefore that he is "unapproachable" in his own field of the sensuous description of nature.[30]

Swinburne's relative estimate of the Romantic poets in both "Byron" and "Wordsworth and Byron" has been used to describe what he meant by "internal music," and the suggestion has been made that Shelley alone achieved this essential quality;[31] however, the description of Shelley pertains only to that of the poet whose "internal music" is "passionate" and "prophetic." Shelley is Swinburne's supreme example of such a poet; and, as we shall see, Swinburne identifies his own "internal music" with this type.

The distinction which Swinburne draws between Keats and Shelley pertains to the difference between the Pre-Raphaelites and Swinburne himself.[32] Swinburne's own comments on the Pre-Raphaelites may be compared to Ruskin's more famous remarks -- even though Ruskin's general theory of art is more transcendental than Swinburne's[33] and he tends to stress the external forms of nature, the "very plain and leafy fact" of the primrose more than Swinburne does.[34] Although Ruskin hoped that the Pre-Raphaelites would manifest in their paintings his own and essentially Romantic conception of the interpenetration of the energies of man and nature and of the divine significance of such a "marriage," he was aware that their carefully-wrought paintings often remained in the realm of natural fact. In Coleridge's terms, they had only copied the "natura naturata" and had not mastered the "essence, the natura naturans, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man."[35] Even in Ruskin's earliest comments on the Pre-Raphaelites, the 1851 letters to the Times and the pamphlet which he published later in the same year, this awareness of their limitations can be detected. He praises the Pre-Raphaelites for turning away from the abstract and idealized conventions of painting and honestly and sincerely depicting the concrete realities of nature, but he indicates that such "wise passiveness" to the influences of nature and such imitation of her external forms is only the first (but necessary) step for the creative artist. Ruskin expected the Pre-Raphaelite painters to move on, as did Turner, to imaginatively perceive and creatively manifest the "essential connection of the power of landscape with human emotion."[36] As he says in his 1851 pamphlet, "What faculties, higher than imitative, may be in these men, I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will manifest themselves in due time all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe."[37] In 1853, he is still waiting for the time when they will have completed their apprenticeship to nature. Here he notes in their work a lack of "imagination," a word which has the same general significance for Ruskin as it does for the Romantics: the Pre-Raphaelites have tremendous potentials "of imagination, as well as of realization, and do not yet themselves know of how much they would be capable, if they worked on a larger scale and with a less laborious finish."[38] In 1857, he is finally forced to conclude that Millais, at least, is not in the "great Imaginative group of masters."[39]

Ruskin opposed not only the depiction of external details in the manner of the Dutch realists but also the projection of arbitrary and subjective emotion on to the object. Although his criticism of the pathetic fallacy can be distinguished from Swinburne's denunciation of didacticism, interestingly enough Ruskin points out that Wordsworth is guilty of such subjective projection. Ruskin's general comments on the pathetic fallacy, and on the "grotesque," are indications of his failing faith in the Romantic vision of nature and of man. Like many other great Victorians, Ruskin was increasingly disturbed by the "hammers" of the "geologists" and increasingly aware of the terror and mystery of life. As Rosenberg points out in his excellent book on Ruskin, in Ruskin's later comments on Turner, he praises the painter not so much for his imaginative vision as for his tragic vision. Turner's work conveys both a sense of the darkness of nature, "nature with the worm at its root: rose and cankerworm," and of the dark suffering of man.[40]

Swinburne also, but less publicly, criticises the Pre-Raphaelite painters, particularly Hunt and Millais, for the "vexatious and laborious error of microscopic manipulation of minutiae."[41] What they too frequently lack is "harmony" and "a wider sense of things," the first quality pertaining to Swinburne's general conception of good art and the second more to his own preference for a certain type of "harmony."[42] Swinburne, however, does not criticize Rossetti for such detailed delineation of the object; nor does he (or Ruskin) link Rossetti with the movement toward subjectivism -- one which may also be associated with Keats, as we suggested in Chapter I when mentioning the Romantic poet's difficulty in connecting the realm of the imagination with the ideal or with the real world. Instead, as we established in Chapter III when discussing Swinburne's conception of "harmony," Rossetti is Swinburne's supreme example of a painter and a poet who achieves "harmony" in the more Keatsian realm of detailed and concentrated work.[43]

For all his praise of Rossetti, however, his preference among poets is for Shelley and among painters, for Turner. Swinburne's admiration of Turner has been recorded by E.T. Cook. In his diary, Cook recounts a remark the aging Swinburne made to him about Turner:

> The only time [Ruskin] came to rooms of mine he was delighted at seeing those engravings of Turner, for Rossetti and Ned Jones did not care much about Turner, but I was brought up on him (he used to visit my family) and simply revel in everything of his.[44]

Swinburne's enthusiasm for Turner is much deeper than the fact that he was a friend of Swinburne's beloved grandfather -- or that he illustrated the Italy of Swinburne's first poetic idol, Rogers.[45] In his criticism Swinburne essentially praises Turner's achievement of the "harmony" of the "prophetic" and "passionate" artist, the artist who captures the "wider sense of things." For Swinburne, there is an "unique and unmistakeable kinship or identity of genius between the Turner of poetry and the Shelley of painting."[46] Turner is particularly compared to Shelley (and to Hugo) in terms of his achievement of "an impassioned realism of landscape."[47]

Swinburne's comparison of Shelley and Turner is now, of course, a standard one. Northrop Frye, for instance, draws much the same parallel between the two artists as Swinburne did. He also uses the term "realism" to describe their art:

> In such painting [as Turner's] we are still in the area of representation, even of "realism", but it is a realism that renders a sense of rhythm and movement in nature, and that demands a physical sense of participating in this rhythm from us.[48]

There are also some critics who have perceived the similarities between Turner and Swinburne himself. Rosenberg is one of these critics, and he provides an excellent summary of their similarities:

> Like Turner, . . . Swinburne finds in the vast undifferentiated sea the visible emblem of his genius, with its exaltation of energy over form, infinite nuance over discrete detail. . . . One recognizes . . . the same sophisticated virtuosity, alongside an enormous responsiveness to the aboriginal forces of nature. Swinburne's landscapes, like Turner's, abstract all the sharp, divisible aspects of nature into an elemental luminosity and motion. . . . Both men practice a highly structured art that has nonetheless freed itself from the canons of conventional representation. No single word in a Swinburne poem quite corresponds to a given thing, just as no single dab of paint on a Turner canvas corresponds to a natural object; the correspondence is always between the total configuration of the poem or painting and the total configuration of nature. The adjective floating freely away from its substantive in a Swinburne poem is equivalent to the blob of pigment that is neither sea nor foam nor sky, but all of these, in a Turner painting. . . . Swinburne's love of mixed effects gives to his descriptive verse much of its Turnerian quality. His poetry is charged with the tension of delicately poised opposites: shadows thinned by light, lights broken by shade, sunset passing into moonrise, sea merging with sky. He is obsessed by the moment when one thing shades off into its opposite, or when contraries fuse . . . .[49]

Ruskin himself, it may be added, recognized an affinity between the two artists, if only in terms of temperament. As he says to Swinburne in a letter,

> there is assuredly something wrong with you -- awful in proportion

> to the great power it affects and renders (nationally) at present useless. So it was with Turner, so with Byron. It seems the peculiar judgment-curse of modern days that all their greatest men shall be plague-struck. But the truth and majesty which is in their greatest, causes the plague which is underneath, in the hearts of meaner people, smooth outwardly, to be in them visible outside while there is purity within. The rest are like graves which appear not -- and you are rose graftings set in dung.[50]

This (somewhat ambiguous) remark was made in 1866, just after Ruskin had read Poems and Ballads; perhaps if he had commented on the poetry of the later Swinburne, he would have noted other parallels between the two artists in addition to those of temperament and subject matter. Indeed, Ruskin's description of Turner's painting in his 1851 pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism could be a description of the later nature poetry of Swinburne; and the contrast which he establishes here between Turner and Millais could be a contrast between Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites in general.[51]

Swinburne is, then, of the Church of Shelley in terms of the purpose of his art and of the techniques which he uses to achieve his purpose. There are, however, essential differences in terms of his vision or his "wider sense of things." As has been previously maintained, for Swinburne there is no "serene and remote" transcendent source as there is for Shelley (or for Hugo).[52] Furthermore, his vision of nature is much darker than Shelley's.[53] And, it may be added, the darkness is different from the type Swinburne found in Byron, whom he saw as retaining remnants of the Christian view of nature as fallen. The darkness in Swinburne's poetry is, instead, the result of his acceptance of the Darwinian view of nature.[54] The darkness, however, is not that of despair: unlike many of his contemporary poets, Swinburne believes that man should not be overwhelmed by the destruction and cruelty of nature, but should face her naked truths with joy --

and with a sense of release from false restrictions. When commenting on the power of Shelley and of Byron and Hugo to capture the "wider sense of things," he particularly praises those moments in which they most approximate his own vision of the "inner music" of nature and passionately participate in this music. After discussing Keats and Wordsworth in "Byron," published in the same year as Poems and Ballads, Swinburne suggests:

> Turn now to Byron and to Shelley. These two were not content to play with [Nature's] skirts and paddle in her shallows. Their passion is perfect, a fierce and blind desire which exalts and impels their verse into the high places of emotion and expression. They feed upon nature with a holy hunger, follow her with a divine lust as of gods chasing the daughters of men. Wind and fire, the cadences of thunder and the clamours of the sea, gave to them no less of sensual pleasure than of spiritual sustenence. These things they desired as others desire music or wine or the beauty of women. This outward and indifferent nature of things, cruel in the eyes of all but her lovers, and even in theirs not loving, became as pliant to their grasp and embrace as any Clymene or Leucothea to Apollo's. To them the large motions and the remote beauties of space were tangible and familiar as flowers.[55]

In this important early essay, Swinburne also includes Hugo among the "passionate" nature poets who deal with "the higher things of nature, with her large issues and remote sources." Hugo is the only living poet who "also can pass beyond the idyllic details of landscape, and put out from shore into the wide waste places of the sea."[56] His estimation of Hugo here is reaffirmed in his later comparison of Byron and Hugo in Under the Microscope, published just before Songs before Sunrise. Hugo, a "greater" poet technically than Byron, is also praised here for "his magnificent quality of communion with the great things of nature and translation of the joyous and terrible sense they give us of her living infinity."[57]

In the passages from "Byron," the image of the woman and that of the sea are intermingled. Nature is seen as a storm-tossed sea and if not a cruel at least an indifferent woman. The images are combined not only in the suggestion that the skirts of Nature are her shallows or shore but also in the reference to the poet as an Apollo pursuing Clymene and Leucothea, as both goddesses are associated with the sea.[58] In combination, the images suggest both the darker aspects of existence and man's joyful and passionate embracing of these truths. In his critical works, Swinburne is particularly drawn to those passages in other writers in which the description of stormy seas carries such symbolic implications. Hugo's "Une nuit qu'on entendait la mer sans la voir," for instance, is accorded special significance as a "song in which the sound of the sea is rendered as in that translation of the trumpet-blast of the night-wind, with all its wails and pauses and fluctuations and returns, done for once into human speech and interpreted into spiritual sense for ever."[59] Although Peters suggests that Swinburne is but praising Hugo for achieving the highest form of "external music," the "translation" or, as Peters calls it, "the imitation in verse of the actual sounds of nature,"[60] the poem seems to have a greater significance than this for Swinburne. In this poem Hugo has not only imitated the sounds of nature; he has "interpreted" her into "spiritual sense for ever." The language here is close to that with which Swinburne describes Shelley, the passionate and prophetic nature poet who breathes the "spirit of sense" and renders "truths of inspired perception," and the implication is that Hugo has passionately penetrated to the essence of nature and has suggested her meaning for man. As Swinburne says elsewhere, again in connection with Hugo's description of the sea and again recalling his own remarks on

Shelley,

> Of the master's unequalled power upon natural things, upon the elements we call inanimate, knowing even less the laws of their life than of ours, there is happily no need . . . to speak. Part of this power we may recognize as due to the subtle and deep admixture of moral emotion and of human sentiment with the mysterious action and passion of nature.[61]

For Swinburne, such descriptions of the stormy sea capture something of his own sense of the underlying "tragic awe and terror"[62] of existence. Hugo also achieves this same tragic grandeur or "sublimity" when dealing not directly with nature but with the suffering of man.[63] There is, says Swinburne, a "latent mystery of terror which lurks in all the highest poetry or beauty, and distinguishes it . . . from all that is but a little lower than the highest."[64] In order to capture the essence of such poetry, which itself captures something of his own sense of existence, Swinburne himself often uses the metaphor of the stormy sea. He suggests, for instance, that Tennyson was occasionally able to "wheel sharply aside from the usually gentle and idyllic shallows that lay dimpling and glimmering inshore and strike straight into such splendid and stormy waters as gave its deathless music to the deathless passion of Rizpah and Boadicea."[65] This passage is almost an exact echo of his earlier remarks on Hugo (and on Byron and Shelley). And when characterizing the essence of Hugo's own genius, Swinburne compares it to one of his own experiences at sea:

> Only once in my life have I seen the likeness of Victor Hugo's genius. Crossing over when a boy from Ostend, I had the fortune to be caught in midchannel by a thunderstorm . . . . About midnight the thundercloud was right overhead, full of incessant sound and fire, lightening and darkening so rapidly that it seemed to have life, and a delight in its life. . . . Underneath and about us the sea was paved with flame; the whole water trembled and hissed with phosphoric fire; even through the wind and thunder I could hear the crackling and spluttering of the watersparks. . . . That, in most close and exact symbol, is the best possible

> definition I can give of Victor Hugo's genius. And the impression of that hour was upon me the impression of his mind; physical, as it touched the nerves with a more vivid passion of pleasure than music or wine; spiritual, as it exalted the spirit with the senses and above them to the very summit of vision and delight. It is no fantastic similitude, but an accurate likeness of two causes working to the same effect.[66]

As we have seen, in his criticism Swinburne also often suggests that an artist's depiction of the dark lady captures the same elemental sense of existence,[67] and, less frequently, uses this image to capture the essence of works which do not themselves use the figure of the woman to embody this truth.[68]

Such critical comments are at the heart of Swinburne: although he accords a place in his heaven of poet-gods for those who have achieved other types of harmony, he particularly reveres those who have passionately embraced the terror and mystery of existence and have captured this elemental truth in perfect art. In his own creative works, the same truth is embraced and is often expressed in the image of the sea. As we have seen, the image is present in both Poems and Ballads and Songs before Sunrise. In the "Hymn to Proserpine," for instance, we have the shark-toothed "wave of the world," and in the paired poem of the next volume, "Hymn of Man," we have the "cruel and blind" sea of life.[69] Similarly, we have the dark and stormy sea as an image of man's existence in both of his Greek dramas, Atalanta and Erechtheus.[70] In many of these earlier works, images of the sea and the woman are intermingled: as was suggested previously, Venus is identified with the sea in both the "Hymn to Proserpine" and Atalanta, for example; and the Great White Goddess herself is seen as the sea in "The Triumph of Time."[71] Even in "Hertha" itself, Swinburne's central poem, the Great Mother is associated with the sea: "In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea."[72]

The image of the stormy sea predominates in Swinburne's later "nature poetry," and is often even part of those poems which continue in the mood of "The Triumph of Time" and are concerned with the loss of love. In "At a Month's End," for instance, the estranged lovers stand together for the last time and watch the waves, "the serried /Spears of the tide storming the shore":

> With chafe and change of surges chiming,
>   The clashing channels rocked and rang
> Large music, wave to wild wave timing,
>   And all the choral water sang.
>
> Faint lights fell this way, that way floated,
>   Quick sparks of sea-fire keen like eyes
> From the rolled surf that flashed, and noted
>   Shores and faint cliffs and bays and skies.[73]

The image of the woman itself tends to be less predominant in the later poems, partially because Swinburne had used the image of the cruel and indifferent woman for different purposes in his earlier works. Although there is definitely an underlying suggestion that Venus and Proserpine should be seen as aspects of Hertha, these central figures of Poems and Ballads are employed primarily as symbols of the speakers' fragmented views of existence and are therefore associated with Swinburne's exploration of the psychological barriers to full vision. More significantly, however, the figure of the woman fades from Swinburne's own poetry simply because he is presenting his own vision of existence more directly. He is attempting to capture not only the spirit of nature but also man's own spirit when encountering the large elements and powerful forces of nature, particularly those of the undifferentiated and indifferent sea. These forces are, of course, still aspects of Hertha, and the link between the Mother and the sea is still asserted. In "The Garden of Cymodoce," for instance, the poet invokes his mother and muse:

> O to me
> Mother more dear than love's own longing, sea,
> More than love's eyes are, fair,
> Be with my spirit of song as wings to bear,
> As fire to feel and breathe and brighten; be
> A spirit of sense more deep of deity,
> A light of love, if love may be, more strong
> In me than very song.

In the poem "In Guernsey," he gives himself to his mother and lover as he swims in the sea:

> Once more I give me body and soul to thee,
> Who hast my soul for ever: cliff and sand
> Recede, and heart to heart once more are we.
>
> My heart springs first and plunges, ere my hand
> Strike out from shore: more close it brings to me,
> More near and dear than seems my fatherland,
> My mother sea.

And in "Ex-Voto," he desires that his mother and lover will also be his destroyer:

> But when my time shall be,
> O mother, O my sea,
> Alive or dead, take me,
> Me too, my mother.[74]

Sexual imagery is also often present in the nature poems, particularly those which are concerned with swimming in the sea, and it conveys a sense of the passion and creativity of union with nature. The encounter with nature is both actual[75] and symbolic: nature is both passionately felt and simultaneously "interpreted into spiritual sense." As Swinburne suggests of poets like Shelley and Hugo (and of his own reading of Hugo's poetry) the reaction is "physical, as it touch[es] the nerves with a more vivid passion of pleasure than music or wine; spiritual as it exalt[s] the spirit with the sense and above them to the very summit of vision and delight."[76] In such moments, the spirit moves from the skirt or shore of detailed and idyllic or limited perception to embrace the truth of naked nature and to confront the stormy seas of existence.

If the sea is the "emblem" of Swinburne's "genius," as Rosenberg and others have suggested, then the sea which particularly symbolizes his vision of life is the northern sea, just as his Hertha is a northern goddess. The stormy northern waters are associated with the dark strife of nature and with man's ability not merely to accept but to embrace the stern actualities of existence with a sense of joy and freedom, to participate in the "joy of strife."[77] The English Channel and the seascapes of Cornwall and Northumberland are especially connected with his vision of life. As we have seen, Swinburne compares his boyhood experience of crossing the Channel during a raging storm to the effect of reading Hugo's works. His own poem, "A Channel Passage," presents the deep and lasting effect of this experience at sea. The poem is passionately prophetic and captures his sensual and spiritual participation in the joy and terror of existence which is embodied in the storm. Images of light and darkness, rapture and rage, glory and terror are intermingled, and the storm is seen as the violent lovemaking of sea and sky: "a rapture of rage made joyous the spirit and strength of the soul of the sea," and

> the central crest of the night was cloud that thundered and flamed, sublime
> As the splendour and song of the soul everlasting that quickens the pulse of time.
> The glory beholden of man in a vision, the music of light overhead,
> The rapture and radiance of battle, the life that abides in the fire of a word,
> In the midmost heaven enkindled, was manifest far on the face of the sea[.][78]

In this moment, all opposites, both internal and external, are united, and the harmony of love and strife is coinstantaneously felt and given visionary significance: the scene was

> lovelier than dreams may behold, and deep
> As life or as death, revealed and transfigured, may shine on the soul through sleep.
> All glories of toil and of triumph and passion and pride that it yearns to know
> Bore witness there to the soul of its likeness and kinship, above and below.
> The joys of the lightnings, the songs of the thunders, the strong sea's labour and rage,
> Were tokens and signs of the war that is life and is joy for the soul to wage.
> No thought strikes deeper and higher than the heights and the depths that the night made bare,
> Illimitable, infinite, awful and joyful, alive in the summit of air[.]

And:

> No love sees loftier and fairer the form of its godlike vision in dreams
> Than the world shone then, when the sky and the sea were as love for a breath's length seems --
> One utterly, mingled and mastering and mastered and laughing with love that subsides
> As the glad mad night sank panting and satiate with storm, and released the tides. (VI, 281-282)

In the poems associated with the Channel Island and with the spirit of Hugo, the dangerous sea is also an emblem of the strife of existence. In "The Garden of Cymodoce," for instance, the sea is seen as a "murderous web": as the poet says to his mother and lover,

> here of all thy waters, here of all
> Thy windy ways the wildest, and beset
> As some beleaguered city's war-breached wall
> With deaths enmeshed all round it in deep net,
> Thick sown with rocks deadlier than steel, and fierce
> With loud cross-countering currents, where the ship
> Flags, flickering like a wind-bewildered leaf,
> The densest weft of waves that prow may pierce
> Coils round the sharpest warp of shoals that dip
> Suddenly, scarce well under for one brief
> Keen breathing-space between the streams adverse[.]

The island itself (like the "steam-souled ship" of "A Channel Passage") is identified with the spirit of a man who, like Hugo, joyfully and fearlessly lives at the heart of life:

> And midmost of the murderous water's web
> All round it stretched and spun,
> Laughs, reckless of rough tide and raging ebb,
> The loveliest thing that shines against the sun.[79]

In a series of letters written while visiting Guernsey and Sark, Swinburne directly affirms the significance of this seascape to him: "all this part of the channel is the crown and flower of all seas in the world for splendour of beauty as well as menace -- being the most dangerous of them all, as my father who knew them all assured me, in confirmation of the old seaman's accuracy in Les Travailleurs de la Mer. I need it all, beauty and splendour and grandeur and miracle of renewed wonder on every line of the coast . . . ."[80] In these letters he also compares this coast with those of Cornwall and Northumberland, the other seascapes which appear frequently in his poems and are given visionary significance. In the poem "In Memory of John William Inchbold," his recollection of the rides with his friend by the sea near Tintagel seems to have the same symbolic significance for him as his crossing the Channel -- although the poem itself is much less "visionary":

> I, now long since thy guest of many days,
> Who found thy hearth a brother's, and with thee
> Tracked in and out the lines of rolling bays
> And banks and gulfs and reaches of the sea --
>
> Deep dens wherein the wrestling water sobs
> And pants with restless pain of refluent breath
> Till all the sunless hollow sounds and throbs
> With ebb and flow of eddies dark as death[.]

Now, however, the coast of Tintagel

> Shall hear no more by joyous night or day
> From downs or causeways good to rove and ride

Or feet of ours or horse-hoofs urge their way
That sped us here and there by tower and tide.[81]

The scene which Swinburne describes here is much like that of "Hesperia," and, indeed, even though one poem is again more visionary than the other, both may be based on the same experience of riding by the sea.[82] The coast of Northumberland is associated by Swinburne not only with his own boyhood memories but also with the fearless and free spirit of his ancestors:

The splendour and the strength of storm and fight
Sustain the song
That filled our fathers' hearts with joy to smite,
To live, to love, to lay down life that right
Might tread down wrong.

And:

None save our northmen ever, none but we,
Met, pledged, or fought
Such foes and friends as Scotland and the sea
With heart so high and equal, strong in glee
And stern in thought.[83]

In the same series of letters from the Channel Islands, it may be added, Swinburne contrasts the sublimity of these northern waters with the loveliness of the Mediterranean.[84] Similarly, in his poetry he often contrasts the landscapes of north and south and the attitudes to existence which are symbolized by them.

If Swinburne's central image of the nature of existence is the stormy northern waters, then his central emblems of the spirit who joyfully accepts this truth are the swimmer and the seamew who brave the rough waters. The symbol of the swimmer, present in Songs before Sunrise and in "In Guernsey" and "Ex-Voto," is also central in other works, such as "In the Water." In this poem, Swinburne indicates that a delight in the force of the sea and a sense of its significance has been his since he was a boy, and that his exuberant swim with his friend "rekindle[s] the life" within him:

As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of limbs that the waters enfold
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though the burden it quits were sore,
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are absorbed in the life they adore --
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the forehead, and bends not the knee --
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the laws that atone and agree,
In the measureless music of things, in the fervour of forces that rest or that roam,
That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and you after me
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.[85]

The symbol is, as we shall see, also employed in "The Lake of Gaube" and "Tristram of Lyonesse," two of Swinburne's most important works.

In "A Channel Passage" Swinburne suggests that the storm over the northern sea was "Filled full with delight that revives in remembrance a sea-bird's heart in a boy" (VI, 281). The seamew -- which, interestingly enough, is sacred to Leucothea, the Great White Goddess of the sea -- was Swinburne's personal emblem when he was a boy. The image of this bird recurs throughout his poetry; it appears more frequently than that of the ship at sea or the rider by the shore, perhaps even more than that of the swimmer.[86] It is present both in his "personal poems" and in his "nature poems": in "Thalassius," Swinburne's spiritual autobiography, he identifies himself with the seamew; in "A Word for the Wind," he suggests that only the seamew can brave the windy waters, and in "The Garden of Cymodoce," that the island in the middle of the dangerous seas is inhabited only by the seamew.[87] This living at the center of existence is often presented as a participation in the "internal music" of nature, and it is often identified with Swinburne's own song.[88] Both ideas are particularly brought together in the image of the seamew, Swinburne's most constant emblem of his own "spirit of sense" and his own song.

In one poem, "To a Seamew," Swinburne directly addresses his "brother,"[89] obviously having in mind Keats' address to the nightingale and, most particularly, Shelley's to the skylark.[90] Indeed, in the poem itself a contrast is established between the joy of the seamew and that of these symbolic birds of the Romantic poets:

> The lark knows no such rapture,
>   Such joy no nightingale
> As sways the songless measure
> Wherein thy wings take pleasure[.][91]

This contrast is not continued in the poem, but it is implied in the characteristics attributed to the seamew itself. All of the birds are associated with song, but Swinburne's seamew is not a disembodied voice from (or aspiring to) the transcendent realm, a realm which at least in Keats is disassociated from the dark realm of reality (and perhaps from the realm of the ideal, as well). The seamew is a part of nature both as a spirit and a singer -- the first, as in the lines above, represented by the "silence" of its wings in flight, and the second by its "note's elation."[92] The connection between the seamew and the world of nature is clearly established by the imagery. The sea itself, emblem again of the strife of nature, is described in bird images: "[t]he wave's wing" also "spreads and flutters," and the bird's song "matches the wave's full metre."[93] The joy of the seamew is greater than that of the nightingale or lark precisely because it triumphantly accepts as both spirit and singer the darkness of reality:

> With wider wing, and louder
>   Long clarion-call of joy,
> Thy tribe salutes the terror
> Of darkness, wild as error,

But sure as truth, and prouder
Than waves with man for toy;
With wider wing, and louder
Long clarion-call of joy.[94]

Its joy is also greater now than that of the poet himself, "Whose passion on earth is nearest thine." Once the poet had wings like those of the seamew, but now he is wingless and weighed down with the cares of the self-conscious man,

Whose faint heart sickens
With hopes and fears that blight
Such life as thrills and quickens
The silence of thy flight.[95]

The poem is a series of interlocking relationships, and the poet's present state is identified through similar imagery with the life of the waves. In contrast with the bird's constant triumph, the individual waves have but a brief and triumphant moment of "passion" and "power," then "[f]all" and "die."[96] Just as man's "faint heart sickens," so, too, "[t]he wave's heart swells and breaks."[97] Now the poet himself has also "fallen" -- "even we, whose passion on earth is nearest thine" -- and "dream[s] of dying."[98] Just as the "wave's wing spreads and flutters, /The wave's heart swells and breaks," so now

Our dreams have wings that falter,
Our hearts bear hopes that die.[99]

The seamew, however, remains a constant ideal for the poet of an unchanging sense of joy in nature and of the unfaltering song he himself wishes he could achieve again and "for ever."[100]

Of those poems mentioned here, "A Channel Passage" may be considered representative of those of Swinburne's "nature poems" which focus on the central moment of man's visionary participation in the forces of existence. It is typical not only in its use of the symbols of the northern sea and the seamew but also in its poetic technique.

Here, matter and manner are one, and the movement of the lines themselves suggests the mysterious force of life which is behind all forms and beyond all formulations. Even Watts-Dunton, often erroneously accused of diverting Swinburne's poetic energies from the vital concerns of his earlier poetry to the dull and profitless description of natural scenery, realizes the deep import of such verses and defends their method. "There is no greater mistake," he says in a review of Studies in Song, "than that of comparing poetry whose mental value consists in a distinct and logical enunciation of ideas, and poetry whose mental value consists in the suggestive richness of symbol latent in rhythm, and even of colour."[101] As Swinburne himself maintained, in the highest lyrical poetry, "There must be something in the mere progress and resonance of the words, some secret in the very motion and cadence of the lines, inexplicable by the most sympathetic acuteness of criticism.[102] In "A Channel Passage" itself, he suggests that no thought is as elevated or as profound as the immediate effect on spirit and sense of the scene of the storm at sea:

No thought strikes deeper or higher than the heights and depths that the night made bare,
Illimitable, infinite, awful and joyful, alive in the summit of air --
Air stirred and thrilled by the tempest that thundered between its reign and the sea's,
Rebellious, rapturous, and transient as faith or as terror that bows man's knees. (VI, 282)

Accordingly, in the poem he uses his diction and prosodic devices to capture the essence of the experience which is beyond and beneath thought. Here, and in other similar poems, he attempts to take us beyond and beneath the conceptual framework by which we organize and limit our perceptions of the world. Jerome J. McGann, a critic who, with "sympathetic acuteness," has done even more than Rosenberg to show that Swinburne's poems are actually careful and complicated structures, makes essentially the same remark in his Swinburne: "Swinburne deliberately puts meaning beyond the grasp of the cognitive faculties by creating immensely difficult poetic systems or relations . . . ."[103]

Earlier in his Swinburne, McGann had suggested that Swinburne's poetry "tends not to move in a direction, like a path, but to accumulate additions, like coral. . . . His propensity is towards forms which . . . spin off from a center, accumulating all the while what can be a bewildering variety of figures and images which are constantly interacting with each other."[104] The poet uses many devices -- such as puns, doublings, mixed and shifting metaphor, ambiguous pronoun reference, synaesthesia, elaborate internal and external rhyme structures, and long and complicated periodical grammatical structures -- for "multiplying poetic relations."[105] Such devices are, as McGann maintains, "simply Swinburne's most elementary techniques for suggesting the unity of existence, no matter what its transformations, which are always many."[106] Swinburne's poetic technique is, then, an attempt to manifest the interconnectedness of all or, in Swinburne's own words, the "multiform unity of inclusion."[107]

Here, McGann explains the meaning and method of Swinburne's poetry by pointing to the fact that the poet constantly places himself and his reader at a boundary line: "His verse is remarkably rich in boundaries -- in images, poetic forms, and prosodic devices which can suggest a point of limits."[108] This is not only the point at which sky and sea merge, as Rosenberg noted when comparing Swinburne to Turner; it is also the point at which "multiple worlds," both external and internal, "are felt to impinge upon each other."[109] The boundary situation of the conclusion of "In the Bay," for instance, is more than just the fusion of sky and sea. The poem, which, as we will see, recalls certain implications of the western dawn and the "fortunate islands . . . lit with the light of ineffable faces" of "Hesperia," is addressed to the spirits of Marlowe and Shakespeare, who are one with Apollo, the enduring sun of poetry:

> Ye rise not and ye set not; we that say
> Ye rise and set like hopes that set and rise
> Look yet but seaward from a land-locked bay;
> But where at last the sea's line is the sky's
> And truth and hope one sunlight in your eyes,
> No sunrise and no sunset marks their day.[110]

Tiresias, the visionary prophet, also "occupies the boundary":

> I stand a shadow across the door of doom,
>   Athwart the lintel of death's house, and wait;
>   Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by fate,
> Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the tomb;
>   A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,
>   Driven between days that shall be and that were.[111]

As McGann suggests, once this boundary situation is noticed, it will be seen to pervade Swinburne's poems: "Between the moondawn and the sundown here /The twilight hangs half starless," "In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland, /At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee," "Between the green bud and the red," and "Between the wave ridge and the strand."[112] The result is that we seem to be at the undifferentiated center of existence and meaning and, as McGann notes, "sense the presence of an enormous life which keeps transforming itself and hence which always remains beyond the borders of our conscious grasp and sure control."[113]

As McGann suggests in a different context, Swinburne's attempt is essentially to "transform the very nature of man's way of speaking."[114]

Swinburne attempts to accomplish with words what Bataille suggested de Sade attempted to do with sex: to transgress cultural expectations and to break down the patterns of our "discontinuous existence" and achieve "continuity."[115] In Atalanta in Calydon, the Chorus, which succumbs with bitterness to the rule of the eternal "God most high," "the supreme evil," maintains that the Word is from God and is man's supreme curse:

> Who hath given man speech? or who hath set therein
> A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?
> For in the word his life is and his breath,
>   And in the word his death[.][116]

The Chorus ultimately advocates silent submission to the power of the Godhead which it conceives of as existing beyond the cruel contraries of life and cruelly creating them for man:

>   But ye, keep ye on earth
>   Your lips from over-speech,
> Loud words and longing are so little worth;
>   And the end is hard to reach.
> For silence after grievous things is good,
>   And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,
> And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
>   And lordship of the soul.
> But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit
>   And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
>   For words divide and rend;
>   But silence is most noble till the end.[117]

Swinburne, whose attitude has often been mistaken for that of the Chorus, actually advocates a positive alternative to such silence: the recovery of the true word which, as he establishes in "Hymn of Man" of Songs before Sunrise, is of earth and therefore of man, and is man himself.

> Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten; thy death is upon
>   thee, O Lord.
> And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the
>   wind of her wings --
> Glory to man in the highest! for Man is the master of things.[118]

In "On the Downs," the poem in Songs before Sunrise most like the later "nature poems," he presents the individual man's recovery of the "wise word of the secret earth":

A multitudinous monotone
Of dust and flower and seed and stone,
  In the deep sea-rock's mid-sea sloth,
In the live water's trembling zone,
  In all men love and loathe
    One God at growth.

One forceful nature uncreate
That feeds itself with death and fate,
  Evil and good, and change and time,
That within all men lies at wait
  Till the hour shall bid them climb
    And live sublime.[119]

In "An Autumn Vision," one of the later "nature poems," Swinburne links such a revelation of the word of earth with the revelation of the visionary poet who accepts earth's "divine contraries." Like "A Channel Passage," a sudden storm at sea is again the visible emblem of the nature of existence:

And the storm's full frown was crossed by the light of its own deep smile.
As the darkness of thought and of passion is touched by the light that gives
Life deathless as love from the depth of a spirit that sees and lives,
From the soul of a seer and singer, wherein as a scroll unfurled
Lies open the scripture of light and of darkness, the word of the world,
So, shapeless and measureless, lurid as anguish and haggard as crime,
Pale as the front of oblivion and dark as the heart of time,
The wild wan heaven at its height was assailed and subdued and made
More fair than the skies that know not of storm and endure not shade.
The grim sea-swell, grey, sleepless, and sad as a soul estranged,
Shone, smiled, took heart, and was glad of its wrath: and the world's face changed.[120]

Once again, Swinburne identifies the Logos or the Word with the original and immanent female principle, the "many-childed mother great and grey" whose "multitudinous bosom . . . bare /Our father's generations" and "Whose multiplying hands /Wove the world's web with divers races fair /And cast it waif-wise on the stream, /The waters of centuries . . . ."[121] As was established in Chapter II, this Word is not that of the transcendent male principle of Christian and of most Platonic thought. Indeed, Swinburne continues to alter subtly the Biblical word to his own "scripture of light and darkness" and to capture a sense of Hertha herself in his poetry of multiple relationships and monotones.[122]

If Swinburne himself occasionally advocates silence, it is not because he has submitted to the "God most high" like the Chorus of *Atalanta*. Instead, as McGann also suggests, he sometimes advises silence because the "wrath and anguish" of the isolated and individual ego may drown out the eloquence of earth.[123] As Swinburne says to the seamew,

> Such life as thrills and quickens
>   The silence of thy flight,
> Or fills thy note's elation
> With lordlier exultation
> Than man's, whose faint heart sickens
>   With hopes and fears that blight
> Such life as thrills and quickens
>   The silence of thy flight.[124]

Similarly, if Swinburne occasionally equates the eloquence of earth with silence it is because, unlike the Christian God, Hertha gives no commands and offers no guidance: the word of earth must be enunciated by man, her "light." Although the following lines from the first section of "A Midsummer Holiday" could mistakenly be given transcendent significance, they actually point to Swinburne's conception of the silence and darkness of nature which must be understood and accepted by man:

> The waves are a joy to the seamew, the meads to the herd,
> And a joy to the heart is a goal that it may not reach.
> No sense that for ever the limits of sense engird,
> No hearing or sight that is vassal to form and speech,
> Learns ever the secret that shadow and silence teach,
> Hears ever the notes that or ever they swell subside,
> Sees ever the light that lights not the loud world's tide,
> Clasps ever the cause of the lifelong scheme's control
> Wherethrough we pursue, till the waters of life be dried,
> The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.[125]

This "goal that is not, and ever again the goal," Swinburne suggests here, is sought "with a dream for guide."[126] As well as pointing to the frequent barrier situation in Swinburne's poems, McGann suggests that the visionary state of mind which the poet experiences and, with careful craftsmanship, attempts to inculcate in his reader may be equated with a kind of "sleep-trance" -- a suggestion which recalls Eliot's remark that Swinburne's poetry "appears to be a tremendous statement, like the statements made in our dreams."[127] McGann quotes the following lines from "Sestina" as an example of the Swinburnean sleep-trance:

> For who sleeps once and sees the secret light
>   Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way
> Between the rise and rest of day and night,
>   Shall care no more to fare as all men may,
> But be his place of pain or of delight,
>   There shall he dwell, beholding night as day.[128]

Allusions to sleep and dream recur frequently in the "nature poems" (and in poems on related subjects) and refer both to nature and to man's visionary perception of natural existence. In "Neap-Tide," for instance, the sea is described as a "shadow of dreamlike dread"; and in "In Memory of John William Inchbold," it is suggested that:

> Our Mother Nature, dark and sweet as sleep,
>   And strange as life and strong as death, holds fast,
> Even as she holds our hearts alive, the deep
>   Dumb secret of her first-born births and last.[129]

In "A Channel Passage" it is the poet's "vision of the silent sky, where life was in lustrous tune" that is "lovelier than dreams may behold, and deep /As life or as death, revealed and transfigured, may shine on the soul through sleep." This vision of the storm at sea is, further, likened to "a dream half dreamed." Yet the vision is "Too fleet, too sweet for a dream to recover and thought to remember awake" and it passes "as the passing of sleep" (VI, 281 and 283). Similarly, in "On the South Coast," the vision of the "radiant air and water here by twilight wed" is

divine as dreams
Lit with fire of appeased desire which sounds the secret of all that seems;
Dreams that show what we fain would know, and know not save by the grace of sleep,
Sleep whose hands have removed the bands that eyes long waking and fain to weep
Feel fast bound on them -- light around them strange, and darkness above them steep.130

McGann offers his own caution against possible misinterpretations of Swinburne's sleep-trance, and one must be offered here as well. There is a definite difference between Swinburne's central visionary moment and both the false dreams and hopes associated with the Christian or transcendent view of reality and the desire to sleep beneath the sea -- both, as we have seen, involved with the conception of and longing for perfect unity beyond life and its inevitable contraries. In the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise, as we have seen, the speaker gives up all "dreams of bitter sleep and sweet." Instead,

His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.131

Similarly, in "On the Downs," when the speaker comprehends the secret word of earth, he is released from the world of dreams:

> So my soul sick with watching heard
> That day the wonder of that word,
> And as one springs out of a dream
> Sprang, and the stagnant wells were stirred
> Whence flows through gloom and gleam
> Thought's soundless stream.[132]

As this passage suggests, at the beginning of "On the Downs" the barren waste of the motionless sea on which the speaker gazes is a kind of objective correlative for his inward state of isolation and dejection;[133] but when he is released by the word of earth, so too the wind and light rise over the sea and the waves move joyfully.[134] The same bleak, "bare and blind"[135] scene is presented in many of the later poems. (Indeed, as several critics have pointed out, Swinburne is a master at depicting the external and internal wasteland.[136]) And often the same movement from isolated and self-enclosed desolation or fear to the joy of strife is presented.

However, at the same time the dark and dreaming sea unawakened to the passion of the storm may itself be an emblem of existence. In several poems, Swinburne evokes not the multitudinous, changing life of the storm but the stillness and silence of the death-like womb at the center of existence. One is more the potential for life and the other life actualized and participated in by man, but ultimately the "dreamlike dread" of the stilled sea has the same implications as the violent lovemaking or "choral wrath"[137] of the storm, and both scenes are made up of the contraries of dark and light, death and life.

In "Loch Torridon," both of these scenes are presented and given visionary significance. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker is again travelling over the silent moors at night, along a track which

"Seemed even the dim still path whence none turns back," towards a gorge and the sea:

> The sea, that harbours in her heart sublime
> The supreme heart of the music deep as time,
> And in her spirit strong
> The spirit of all imaginable song.
>
> Not a whisper or lisp from the waters: the skies were not silenter. Peace
> Was between them; a passionless rapture of respite as soft as release.
> Not a sound, but a sense that possessed and pervaded with silent delight
> The soul and the body, clothed round with the comfort of limitless night.
> Night infinite, living, adorable, loved of the land and the sea:
> Night, mother of mercies, who saith to the spirits in prison, Be free.[138]

The speaker fully experiences this "silence diviner than music, . . . darkness diviner than light"[139] and learns "the secret that shadow and silence teach":[140]

> All night long, in the world of sleep,
> Skies and waters were soft and deep:
> Shadow clothed them, and silence made
> Soundless music of dream and shade:
> All above us, the livelong night,
> Shadow, kindled with sense of light;
> All around us, the brief night long,
> Silence, laden with sense of song.

Yet even at the heart of peace and potentiality he is aware of the "endless agitation of things": he remembers

> How oft, with a stormier tide,
> Had the wrath of the winds been vented
> On sons of the tribes long dead:
> The tribes whom time, and the changes
> Of things, and the stress of doom
> Have erased and effaced [.][141]

And at dawn he himself is ready to meet the challenge of life and "things." At the end of the poem we have the more characteristic Swinburnean moment of striving in the sea. Now the waves move with passionate "joy," "the dawn and the water [are] wedded, the hills and the sky set free," and the speaker himself is in the joyful "embrace" of the sea of life.[142] Now the gorge which was as the entrance to death is as the entrance to free life: "The face of the precipice opened and bade us as birds pass through, /And the bark shot sheer to the sea through the strait of the sharp steep cleft, /The portal that opens with imminent rampires to right and to left" on to the "world unconfined":

> The waves that we clove were boundless, the wind on our brows that blew
> Had swept no land and no lake, and had warred not on tower or on tree,
> But came on us hard out of heaven, and alive with the soul of the sea.[143]

Two other poems which involve the symbol of the swimmer present not his energetic plunge into the sea which has been awakened by the wind or aroused by the storm but his quiet encounter with the dreamlike sea of the opening of "Loch Torridon." Once again, for a moment the individual seems to be in touch with the center of existence, both internal and external, rather than to participate with loving energy in eternal becoming. "Off Shore" opens with the still sea mesmerized by the sun: "As a thrall she remains /Spell-bound as with flowers /And content in their chains."[144] Only then, when the sea is still, may the swimmer who dives deep into the "subtle and tangible /Gloom without form"[145] see the "gleam" and the "wonder"[146] of the undersea flowers and foliage:

> Soft blossomless frondage
> And foliage that gleams
> As to prisoners in bondage
> The light of their dreams,
> The desire of a dawn unbeholden, with hope on the wings of its beams.[147]

This poem moves from an evocation of the formless depths of the sea to an apostrophe to Apollo, the god of light and the collective power of man's thought and song. But "A Swimmer's Dream" concerns itself wholly with the mother and source of all[148] and with the visionary moment in which the individual man is at one with her. Here, too, heaven and earth, light and darkness are one.[149] The muted scene is a mingling of grey sea and sky:

> The grey sky gleams and the grey seas glimmer,
>   Pale and sweet as a dream's delight,
> As a dream's where darkness and light seem dimmer,
>   Touched by dawn or subdued by night.

Again, the sea is at peaceful rest; but again the swimmer is aware that towards the west is the strife of stormier waters, associated by him with changeless change and the cycles of seasons:

> Far off westward, whither sets the sounding strife,
>   Strife more sweet than peace, of shoreless waves whose glee
>   Scorns the shore and loves the wind that leaves them free,
> Strange as sleep and pale as death and fair as life,[150]
>   Shifts the moonlight-coloured sunshine on the sea.

Similarly, at the end of the poem the swimmer is lulled by the peaceful motion of the "cloudlike wave," the "cold grey pillow" beneath his head. The peaceful moment soothes him with a "sense of home," and he experiences "divine pleasure" of heaven on earth. Yet he is also aware of his own part in inevitable change, which is also of earth:

> To sleep, to swim, and to dream for ever --
> Such joy the vision of man saw never;
> For here too soon will a dark day sever
>   The sea-bird's wing from the seawave's foam.[151]

The moment endures only in his memory, his individual share in the heaven of man's light.

Like Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," the last section of the poem questions the nature of the visionary experience:

A dream, a dream is it all -- the season,
  The sky, the water, the wind, the shore?
A day-born dream of divine unreason,
  A marvel moulded of sleep -- no more?[152]

The final stanza of the poem provides an answer: the visionary moment is like a dream but is "more than a dream."

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer
  At once and brighter than dreams that flee,
The moment's joy of a seaward swimmer
  Abides, remembered as truth may be.[153]

In "Hesperia" much the same thing is suggested of the speaker's vision of the woman and the speaker's ride with her. Hesperia comes to him "Out of the distance of dreams, as a dream that abides after slumber," yet she is "not a dream."[154] Unlike the visionary experience which Keats presents in the "Ode to a Nightingale" or in "La Belle Dame," Swinburne's moments of vision illuminate the real world: they occur within the realm of reality and are both sensual and spiritual; they reveal that heaven and earth are one; and they include a recognition and acceptance of change and strife. The suggestion in both "A Swimmer's Dream" and "Hesperia" is that the individual man is in touch with ultimate reality or "truth," both internal and external, and that this communication makes the still fearful ride through life or swim in the changing seas of existence a joyful challenge.

Whether it be the peaceful moment of "A Swimmer's Dream" in which one is in contact with the deathlike and formless source of existence or the active moment of "A Channel Passage" and "Hesperia" in which one participates in the flux of life, the visionary moment is, then, "more than a dream." Swinburne's sleep trance is definitely different from those dreams which transport man to a transcendent or a purely inward and subjective Elysium and leave him with a sense of division and isolation. It is, however, much like a dream: as the undersea imagery of such poems as "Off Shore" and "Hesperia" indicates, at this moment man penetrates to the depths not only of nature but also of his own mind and is in touch with the original sources of energy.[155] The experience is based upon original and unconscious connections, yet, as is particularly evidenced in the poems of active participation in the flux, it involves the whole man, both body and soul, "sense and spirit." In "A Channel Passage," for instance, the central visionary experience is but compared to a dream; it is actually "lovelier than dreams," just as it is more profound than thought and more all-embracing than the emotion of love (VI, 281 and 282). The implication here, as in other poems, is that the unconscious and conscious mind, thought and emotion are all involved in this moment of complete awareness and insight. As McGann remarks, this moment is one of "supreme freedom and perfect awareness."[156]

McGann's remark, it may be added, is in keeping with those which Vivante makes in his very suggestive and influential chapter on Swinburne in English Poetry and Its Contribution to the Knowledge of a Creative Principle. Vivante links the essence of Swinburne with the moment at which "form" as both original principle and "actualization and immediate sensuous presence"[157] and also as perfect self-realization is experienced, and with the moment in which "indeterminacy," the pure formlessness of death-like extinction which is at the heart of life and growth and self-renewal, is encountered.[158] Vivante also notes that this moment is associated with Swinburne's conceptions of "freedom," "love," and "fate," and reminds us that for Swinburne value is immanent[159] and includes evil and pain and darkness.

This primary experience of reality Swinburne attempts to capture in his "nature poetry" and to create in his reader. Swinburne attempts to take his reader away from strictly masculine (linear and analytical) thought down to the more inclusive and female level of dreamlike and visionary "perception proper to life at the border," to put his reader in communication with the "multitudinous monotone" of nature and with the same source that "lies at wait" "within all men."[160] In a poem significantly entitled "Plus Intra," Swinburne suggests that "art wakes with music's lure /Soul within sense":

> From depth and height by measurers left immense,
> Through sound and shape and colour, comes the unsure
> Vague utterance, fitful with supreme suspense.[161]

It may be suggested, as does McGann, that Swinburne's own most successful poems are those that appear to the critical, "measur[ing]" intellect most "vague," those that carefully employ the "devices for multiplying relationships" which McGann begins to observe critically, in order to convey this central experience of reality. As McGann says, "precisely when [Swinburne] seems most vague does he succeed in being most precise and true to his own *métier*."[162]

Some of Swinburne's "nature poems" are, if not less successful, at least less central to his apprehension of life: they hint at this central experience of value and use many of the techniques of multiple suggestion, but they remain at the level of individual and occasional experience, or deal more specifically with the philosophical and political implications of freely "commun[ing]" with "actual earth's equalities."[163] "On the Downs" is obviously linked with the dawn of freedom of a social nature, but focuses on the original and individual vision of actualities which makes political freedom an inward reality; many of the later political poems, however, use the same symbolic landscape of stormy sea and rising dawn to make specific political statements.[164] Other poems, it may be added, are less central only to the concerns of this chapter. "By the North Sea," for example, is one of the finest later poems in which the soul moves in spirit out from the waste landscape of limited perception to embrace the truth of the indifferent and stormy seas. Indeed, the dedicatory poem to "By the North Sea" could be considered a kind of summary of the essence of the "nature poems":

> Sea, wind, and sun, with light and sound and breath
>   The spirit of man fulfilling -- these create
>   That joy wherewith man's life grown passionate
> Gains heart to hear and sense to read and faith
> To know the secret word our Mother saith
>   In silence . . . .[165]

The poem itself, however, moves from an evocation of the process by which man hears the silent word of earth and accepts her darkness to a hymn to Apollo, the god of man's light. As we have seen, the same is true of "Off Shore," a fine example of the second pattern of imagery mentioned in Chapter II, the symbolic swim in the sea.

Of the poems which remain in the realm of man's relationship with natural truth, "A Channel Passage" has been considered here to be a representative work. The two "nature poems" which Swinburne considered to be central and among his best works and which involve the third pattern of imagery mentioned in Chapter II, "fearing no more the heat of the sun," remain to be discussed. The first poem, "The Lake of Gaube," follows "A Channel Passage" in the 1904 volume of the same name.[166] Like "A Channel Passage" and other central "nature poems," it is based upon an early personal experience which affected Swinburne tremendously.[167] Again like "A Channel Passage," the experience is recorded in Swinburne's prose criticism of Hugo's works and is connected with the spirit of Hugo. In his treatment of Hugo's letters on his travels to the Alps and Pyrenees, Swinburne notes with regret that Hugo left the "sublime" landscape of the Lake of Gaube unvisited. To him, Hugo is "the one [poet] who would have seemed most fit to describe and capable of describing the lake of Gaube . . . ." In his critical work on Hugo Swinburne attempts his own poetic description of the landscape, which has a "peculiar charm of brilliant and fervent life," and of his experience swimming in the lake, which is famous for claiming the lives of those who dare her:

> The fiery exuberance of flowers among which the salamanders glide like creeping flames, radiant and vivid, up to the very skirt of the tragic little pine-wood at whose heart the fathomless little lake lies silent, with a dark dull gleam on it as of half-tarnished steel; the deliciously keen and exquisite shock of a first plunge under its tempting and threatening surface, more icy cold in spring than the sea in winter; the ineffable and breathless purity of the clasping water in which it seems to savour of intrusive and profane daring that a swimmer should take his pleasure till warned back by fear of cramp when but half way across the length of it, and doubtful whether his stock of warmth would hold out for a return from the far edge opposite . . . .; the sport of catching and taming a salamander . . . .; the beauty of its purple-black coat of scaled armour inlaid with patches of dead-leaf gold, its shining eyes and its flashing tongue . . . .[168]

In the poem itself, this vivid experience, like the earlier one of crossing the Channel, is "interpreted into spiritual sense." "The Lake of Gaube" is, however, perhaps more inclusive than "A Channel Passage": it involves both man's joyful participation in the strife or the "war that is life" (VI, 282) and his initial encounter with the dark and deep source of life and growth and change -- generally, with what Vivante has called "form" and "indeterminacy." Here they are presented as related aspects of the same truth.

The poem opens with the same sunlit and suspense-filled landscape as "Off Shore." Here the separate features of the scene, the mountains and the gorges, are fused by the light of the sun, are "thrilled with sense of unison /In the strong compulsive silence of the sun."[169] Once again, Swinburne employs subtle opposites of sound and silence, and of passionate love and restful satiety, this time with silence and a sense of satiety dominating, in order to present the moment of unity. Heaven and earth

> Lie prone in passion, blind with bliss unseen
> By force of sight and might of rapture, fair
> As dreams that die and know not what they were. (VI, 284)

In the first part of the poem, the living creatures who participate in this silent and sunlit moment of unity are the salamanders. They are one with the landscape: "Flowers dense and keen as midnight stars aflame /And living things of light like flames in flower." And they participate in life with freedom and joy:

> [they] glance and flash as though no hand might tame
> Lightnings whose life outshone their stormlit hour
> And played and laughed on earth, with all their power
> Gone, and with all their joy of life made long
> And harmless as the lightning life of song[.] (VI, 284)

As McSweeney suggests, the salamander is "the visual epiphany of nature's 'secret.'"[170] As such, the creatures are a fusion of the opposites of earth and heaven (they are like both "flowers" and "stars" or, together, like star-like flowers[171]), of dark and light (they "[s]hine" like "stars" in "darkness" and are "deep mild purple flaked with moonbright gold"), and of cold and heat (they have a "flamelike tongue" and "feet that noon leaves cold") (VI, 284 and 285). Yet, at the same time, the creatures are, like Swinburne's more common image of the seamew, individual spirits who exist with freedom and joy in the world of flux or of "objective multiplicity."[172] As an individual spirit, the salamander has conquered its fear of its opposite element: the salamander is a cold-blooded amphibian who here braves the heat of the sun.[173] Most significantly, it has conquered its fear of man:

> The kindly trust in man, when once the sight
> Grew less than strange, and faith bade fear take flight,
> Outlive[s] the little harmless life that shone
> And gladdened eyes that loved it, and was gone
> Ere love might fear that fear had looked thereon. (VI, 285)

In the final stanza of the first section of the poem, stanza four, Swinburne compares man's reactions to those of the salamander. Man fears the creature, and this same fear, which is "one with hate and horror," makes him view his opposite element, the cold waters of the Lake of Gaube, as "deadly deep as hell and dark as death" (VI, 285). Both fearful reactions may be linked with the dualism of the Christian attitude to the world: the salamander is not only the daemon or elemental spirit of fire in Neo-Platonic daemonology but also a symbol of the devil in Christian mythology.[174] Both may also be linked with the survival of such superstitions: salamanders are "much dreaded by country people, . . . even though they are harmless to man . . . ."[175]

The poet himself, however, has overcome his fear of the creature. In the first part of the poem he not only emphasizes its "harmless" (VI, 284 and 285) nature but also reacts to it in an aesthetic and a sympathetic fashion: both the beauty of the salamander and the loving trust which the poet exchanges with it "outlive the little harmless life that shone" for a moment and "was gone" (VI, 285). Previous critics have not pointed out that his reaction to the salamander is much like that of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner to the water-snakes. Both speakers recognize that these "living things" are happy because they are a part of the vital and unified pattern of existence; both recognize their beauty and then spontaneously and instinctively feel love for them. In both poems, this moment of reconciliation is expressed in the same images of sun and moon, heat and cold, light and dark.[176] Indeed, the "Lake of Gaube" not only uses similar image patterns but also contains significant verbal echoes or near-echoes of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."[177]

In both poems, this moment of imaginative awareness begins the renewal of the self and the reconciliation of the self with the world. In "The Lake of Gaube," the poet moves on to fearlessly brave his opposite element, the "dark deep heaven" (itself a reconciliation of the opposites of the poem) of the Lake of Gaube.[178] The second part of the poem presents both the dive into the cold dark waters of the Lake and the more energetic swim which follows it. The imagery gives both aspects of the experience symbolic significance, and the prosody indicates the joyful nature of the whole experience. (As Raymond notes, Swinburne moves here to couplets of what he called anapestic hexameter, a meter which he himself considered to be "resonant and triumphant."[179]) Swinburne presents the first part of the experience, the dive, as the transition from the world of multeity to that of simple unity, from the "multitudinous bloom" of life down to the "silence and gloom" of the formless and death-like night of the source of existence within and without:

> Death-dark and delicious as death in the dream of a lover and dreamer may be,
> It clasps and encompasses body and soul with delight to be living and free:

> Free utterly now, though the freedom endure but the space of a perilous breath,
> And living, though girdled about with the darkness and coldness and strangeness of death[.] (VI, 285)

The symbolic significance of this suggestive passage has been well explored by the critics of the poem. McGann identifies it with the transformative "movement into and across a boundary condition" in which multiple worlds impinge.[180] And Meredith B. Raymond links it with Vivante's "indeterminate moment," that moment in which the individual self encounters the pure and formless "infinitely original cause," that "intensive something, which is not translatable in terms of objective multiplicity," and in which the individual self experiences a death-like annihilation which "implies renewal" and "self-transcendency."[181] It should also be noted that this part of the poem is much like "A Swimmer's Dream" or the beginning of "Loch Torridon" and "Off Shore." The source of existence is imaged as night or the silent undersea world, and communion with it as a kind of peaceful rapture. Here, the downward swimmer's participation in pervasive unity is described in much the same way that the union of heaven and earth in the "strong compulsive silence of the sun" is described in the first stanza of the poem: the swimmer is "embraced" by the cold and dark waters,

> Each limb and each pulse of the body rejoicing, each nerve of the spirit at rest,
> All sense of the soul's life rapture, a passionate peace in its blindness blest. (VI, 286)

Once the "dive is done" (VI, 286), the swimmer re-emerges into the world of light. The significance of this second part of the experience, the move back into the world of "objective multiplicity" symbolized by the swim, has not been entirely recognized by the critics.[182] But it is important to note that the swimmer is not absorbed into primal unity, that he does not experience the death for which the "lover and dreamer" (VI, 285) may long.[183] Instead of death by drowning, the swimmer shoots upward like a "shaft"[184] of light into the world of multëity to begin his joyful "flight" "through the still strong chill of the darkness from shore to shore" (VI, 286). Here we have the central Swinburnean conception of actively striving in a world which includes darkness and change, and it is expressed in the characteristic metaphor of the swim. The swimmer here "strikes forth" (VI, 286) with the same energetic joy that he experiences in "In the Water" and "In Guernsey."[185] In this respect, he is like the individual salamander which joyfully participates in the world of flux: he is like a star in the "infinite heaven" (VI, 286) of the Lake of Gaube. Swinburne also uses his more characteristic metaphor of the seamew here to describe the swimmer's spirit. The swimmer

> Strikes forth, and is glad as a bird whose flight is impelled and
> sustained of love.
> As a sea-mew's love of the sea-wind breasted and ridden for
> rapture's sake
> Is the love of the body and soul for the darkling delight of the
> soundless lake[.] (VI, 286)

Furthermore, as in "A Channel Passage," the experience is linked with a dream, "a dream too living to live for a thought's space more" (VI, 286).

In the third part of the poem, also significantly different in its prosody, the poet attempts to draw a moral from the experience, much as the Ancient Mariner does at the end of Coleridge's poem. Swinburne suggests, however, that the significance of the experience cannot be formulated. He begins the final stanza with a series of questions, but still "Deep silence answers" (VI, 287). The implication is that value and meaning inhere in the specific experience, which is of both "spirit and sense," and cannot be abstracted from it.[186] The experience is its own reply and, like the wings of the seamew, is profoundly silent. The only general affirmation that can be made is that a lie should not keep us from experiencing life:

But well shall it be with us ever
  Who drive through the darkness here,
If the soul that we live by never,
  For aught that a lie saith, fear. (VI, 287)

The "lie" is, of course, the one which Swinburne tried to expose throughout his life, the "1,874 year swindle" of Christianity.[187] The Christian perspective divides heaven from earth, heaven from hell, and life from death, and is responsible for the superstitious fear of the Lake of Gaube as "deadly deep as hell and dark as death" (VI, 285). The poem itself moves towards the reconciliation of multi-relationed opposites,[188] and the series of questions presented in the final stanza also draws these opposites together through the central images of light and darkness. The questions point to the "darkness of life and death" and to the "splendour of death and of life" (VI, 286-287) ("splendour" here being associated with the "golden" light of both "sunset" and "dawn" of the next line).[189] The fact that these questions are in one sense themselves an answer is in keeping with Swinburne's affirmation in "Hymn of Man" and, in a more individual context, in "On the Downs" that the "word" of earth is man's. He resolves these paradoxes not only in his silent experience but also in his prophetic "song," which is equally of "spirit and sense."

The symbolic setting of "A Nympholept" is similar to that of "The Lake of Gaube," and both poems invoke the same essential experience with the same poetic technique. The opening stanza of "A Nympholept" also presents a sun-dominated and silent summer landscape: "Summer, and noon, and splendour of silence . . . ."[190] Again, the governing impression is one of flower and flame: here the "face" of the earth is a "flower" and its creative "breath" of life a "flame" (VI, 127). And again, the perfect moment of the fusion of heaven and earth is presented in sexual terms. The sun, at the height of its power, "[i]mbues and impregnates life with delight" and "[l]eaves earth fulfilled of desires": "the deep mid mystery of light and of heat . . . seem /To clasp and pierce dark earth" (VI, 128 and 129). Here, however, there is perhaps a greater feeling of suspense than in "The Lake of Gaube," as the poet both anticipates and dreads his own individual and complete participation in the moment of union and the revelation of the mysterious word of life. Union of the individual man with the creative and destructive force of life is presented in more explicitly sexual terms than it is in "The Lake of Gaube," where the symbol is the dive and the swim. Here the poet achieves symbolic union with a female figure, the "[u]nknown sweet spirit" (VI, 140) who is a mediatress between him and the awful force of life. Again, this experience is itself the answer and the only revelation: silence remains, but the poet who has dared embrace the constantly changing opposites of dark and light knows them as one and perceives that "heaven is about [him]" (VI, 140) on earth.[191]

In accordance with the experience it invokes, "A Nympolept" proceeds by the presentation of multi-relationed opposites which the speaker himself eventually knows as one; it presents the "multitudinous unity of various and concordant effects."[192] As McGann notes, the poem contains "in abundance all the verbal and syntactic devices" which he has shown to be characteristic of Swinburne.[193] McGann notes one particular device which Baum, the first critic to examine the poem in detail, had described as follows:

> the most striking mannerism is the continual use ["on an average of once every four lines"] of the relative pronoun that introducing an adjectival clause . . . . Its purpose, along with other parenthetical constructions, is a suspension of meaning, a sort of indirection very suitable to the subdued intensity which prevails throughout the poem.[194]

McGann himself links this device, and others for "multiplying poetic relationships," with Swinburne's revelation of the "transformational nature" of life and his presentation of his own boundary experience: "Swinburne himself becomes absorbed into the transformational life at the poem's climax . . . . In the end Swinburne finds himself at the ultimate horizon where all things in heaven and earth . . . converge."[195]

A device of another sort which should be mentioned here is the use of certain "key words" like "flame," "silence," "rapture," "dream," and "vision" which occur throughout the "nature poetry" and acquire a depth and resonance; they are like vatic utterances which invoke a total response from the reader who immerses himself in Swinburne's "scripture of light and darkness, the word of the world." "A Nympholept" is perhaps more successful, at least more acceptable to the general reader, because it achieves depth and resonance by referring not only to Swinburne's own realm of poetry but also to the realm of myth and the universal and archetypal patterns of experience it embodies. Here Swinburne's fundamental conception of the spirit of nature is embodied in the elusive and mysterious figure of Pan and of the nymph who is his mediatress; and Swinburne's central experience of union with that force is linked with the dreadful awe Pan strikes in the hearts of those who encounter him (particularly when he is disturbed at noon) and with the rapture or divine madness inspired by the nymph. As Swinburne says in the "Dedicatory Epistle" to his collected poems, "A Nympholept" is of the "splendid oppression of nature at noon which found utterance of old in words of such singular and everlasting significance as panic and nympholepsy."[196]

Pan is not always depicted as the all-powerful god of creation and destruction that Swinburne makes him here. But Swinburne does take his Pan from certain classical sources, adding the numinous significance which the figure acquires in the Romantic period and his own understanding of the powers of nature, and therefore creating a Pan more awful than most who preceded him. In her excellent study, Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times, Patricia Merivale has gathered together the central classical allusions to Pan, and, in particular, has traced the influence of the Romantic and the Victorian Pans on the modern image of Pan. As she suggests, the Romantic Pan is fundamentally the god of the Orphic Hymn and of Neo-Platonic thought: he is the universal "All," the invisible Spirit of the Universe, which, as was indicated in Chapters I and II, is also linked with the power of love and the figure of the woman.[197] Of secondary importance to the Romantics is the Arcadian Pan, associated with the nostalgia for a lost age of pastoral innocence.[198] In the Victorian age, the Arcadian god is also invoked to contrast the dark present with the idyllic past.[199] But more important in this period is the Plutarchan story of the death of Pan, which was involved in the Victorian debate between the Christian and the spiritual and the pagan and sensuous, between Hebrew and Hellene.[200]

Swinburne, of course, participated in this debate and even welcomed the approaching death of the Christian Gods. Perhaps with the "death of Pan" in mind, he has the speaker in "Hymn to Proserpine" proclaim that the "pale Galilean" has conquered and is "throned where another was king" but will himself die.[201] He alludes more directly to the story of Pan's death in a poem which will be examined in Chapter VII, "Pan and Thalassius." As Thalassius says to Pan,

> Too lightly the words were spoken
> That mourned or that mocked at thee dead.[202]

More important, however, than his participation in the Victorian debate over the values which Christ and Pan symbolize is his part in the development of what Merivale calls the "Gothic Pan." This Pan is a transformation of the Orphic Pan (the symbol of the divine force in nature and man) and represents the developing awareness of the darker forces within and without which culminates in Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian and Freud's of the unconscious.[203] This is the same transformation which was traced in Chapter I, particularly in terms of the symbol of the woman; it is interesting to note that Merivale, too, considers Swinburne a central figure in this movement. Although there were certainly hints of the darker potentialities of Pan before Swinburne, Merivale does credit him with "some originality" in his Pan poems, particularly "A Nympholept," and with a great deal of influence on the tradition of the Gothic Pan in the prose of the modern period, which culminates in D.H. Lawrence.[204]

According to Merivale, all the earlier traces of the terrible Pan which Swinburne depicts derive ultimately from Theocritus' story of the Pan who strikes fear in the heart of shepherds when he is disturbed at mid-day. However, the Pan of Theocritus is usually a gentle and pastoral figure and, as Merivale notes, allusions to Pan in

Euripides and Eusebius actually convey a greater sense of terror.[205] Eusebius, who conceived of Pan as a demon, recounts Porphyry's story of nine worshippers who died of fright after glimpsing the god. Eusebius is probably, according to Merivale, a central source for Swinburne.[206] In addition, Merivale finds traces of the Gothic Pan in Milton and in Henry More which could have influenced Swinburne.[207] She also finds no more than traces of the terrifying implications of Pan in Romanticism, probably because she almost entirely ignores German Romanticism and because she separates Pan almost entirely from Dionysus. Swinburne himself, however, would perhaps have also overlooked the darker Romantic Pans[208] and, like Merivale, would perhaps have found the first strong suggestions of the darker Pan as a symbol of nature and of the unconscious in Carlyle and Robert Louis Stevenson. If he did recall Carlyle's comments on Pan and if he did read Stevenson's brief essay, "Pan's Pipes" (1878), then he would have found a Pan closer to his own than the tradition of Pan as devil, derived from Eusebius.[209]

Pan is a male deity, but he is one who is associated with the earth and the Great Mother, and who is in opposition to the masculine sky gods of the later tradition and of Christianity. Indeed, Swinburne's Pan is the same force as the Great Mother, Hertha, and, as Baum recognized, the poem is "in part" a re-expression of the philosophical ideas of "Hertha."[210] (The difference, of course, is that in "A Nympholept" the ideas are given psychological veracity, are part of the individual's experience, as they are in "On the Downs" and the later "nature poems" in general.) Like Hertha, Pan is the "spirit" or "breath" of life, the "immanent presence" in nature (stanzas 24, 2 and

15, VI, 135, 127 and 132). Like Hertha, Pan contains all opposites. He is "Lord God of life and of light and of all things fair, /Lord God of ravin and ruin and all things dim" (stanza 22, 134):

> But in all things evil and fearful that fear may scan,
>   As in all things good, as in all things fair that fall,
> We know thee present and latent, the lord of man;
>   In the murmuring of doves, in the clamouring of winds that call
>   And wolves that howl for their prey; in the midnight's pall,
> In the naked and nymph-like feet of the dawn, O Pan,
>   And in each life living, O thou the God who art all. (stanza 18, 133)

Throughout the poem he is described in terms of opposites: he is, for instance, the God of "peace" and of "strife" and, most consistently, "God of the light and the darkness" (stanzas 26 and 28, 136 and 137). Even as the God of light, he is both a creative and destructive force: the "shafts" of light from the God's "bow" are "shafts of his love or his anger" and the "fierce mid noon /Conceals [his] mercy and reveals [his] wrath" (stanzas 11 and 16, 131 and 132).

This God who is the spirit within all things is also contrasted in the poem with the heavenly powers of man's own devising. The poet himself suggests that he seeks a "fairer secret than hope or than slumber" reveals:

>   I seek not heaven with submission of lips and knees,
> With worship and prayer for a sign till it leap to light:
>   I gaze on the gods about me, and call on these.
>
> I call on the gods hard by, the divine dim powers
>   Whose likeness is here at hand, in the breathless air,
> In the pulseless peace of the fervid and silent flowers[.] (stanzas 6 and 7, 129)

The heavenly gods which are "conceived of man" are described in the same imagery of "star" and "shadow" as the false Gods in "Hertha" and Songs before Sunrise as a whole.[211] And in "A Nympholept" there is the same suggestion of the twilight of these Gods:

> Stars too but abide for a span,
> Gods too but endure for a season; but thou, if thou be
> God, more than shadows conceived and adored of man,
> Kind Gods and fierce, that bound him and made him free[.]
> (stanza 23, 135)

Furthermore (as in an earlier stanza, stanza 15, 132, where Pan is "Perceived of the soul and conceived of the sense of man"), Pan is both "conceive[d] and perceive[d]" by man "With sense more subtle than senses that hear and see" (stanza 23, 135). The implication is not only that man's sense and soul are one[212] but also that man and the force of nature are one, as only man himself is capable of understanding. Pan is not an entirely separate force; he is also a part of man.

Other ideas central to the Hertha volume are also clarified or reconfirmed in "A Nympholept." First of all, as is suggested above, Pan is not a benevolent force. Pan offers no guidance to man, and the individual man must come to his own awareness of his essential connections and articulate his own revelations. Furthermore, when the force without and within is recognized as the only God, he must accept that the contraries of life, imaged here again as light and darkness, continue:

> only we know that the ways we trod
> We tread, with hands unguided, with feet unshod,
> With eyes unlightened; and yet, if with steadfast mind,
> Perchance may we find thee and know thee at last for God.
>
> Yet then should God be dark as the dawn is bright,
> And bright as the night is dark on the world -- no more.
> Light slays not darkness, and darkness absorbs not light;
> And the labour of evil and good from the years of yore
> Is even as the labour of waves on a sunless shore.

And:

> No service of bended knee or of humbled head
> May soothe or subdue the God who has change to wife:
> And life with death is as morning with evening wed. (stanzas 24,
> 25, and 26, 135 and 136)

Finally, as is emphasized by this recognition of continual contraries, Pan, like Hertha, is not a malevolent force. He is not the evil power that he often is in the early "Gothic tradition" of Eusebius and Milton -- or that Nature is for de Sade -- and is more akin to Nietzsche's amoral Dionysus. Swinburne's general use of opposite images to describe Pan makes this quite clear, and his specific use of the image of the snake confirms it. Pan is both the "dove" and the "snake" (stanzas 18 and 16, 133 and 132) and those who see him only as the snake are themselves evil:

> The fierce mid noon that wakens and warms the snake
>   Conceals thy mercy, reveals thy wrath: and again
> The dew-bright hour that assuages the twilight brake
>   Conceals thy wrath and reveals thy mercy: then
>   Thou art fearful only for evil souls of men
> That feel with nightfall the serpent within them wake,
>   And hate the holy darkness on glade and glen. (stanza 16, 132)

The implication here is that of "The Lake of Gaube": the dualistic or Christian perspective makes man fear nature as a hellish force. Indeed, here Swinburne affirms that "Fear and pain /Were lord and masters yet of the secret sense," but that he now dares embrace the truth of earth (stanza 28, 136). It is difficult to decide whether he speaks of the remnants of such dualistic fears in his own mind or of his natural apprehension of the terrifying potentialities of nature itself. But throughout the poem, the natural "fear" of Pan is associated with "rapture"[213] and is finally transformed into "delight"[214] when the poet fully experiences the force within him (his "secret sense") and within nature.

This experience, it may be added, does not entirely negate the poet's individuality or transport him through sleep or death to higher realms. As we have seen, the poet seeks a "fairer secret than hope or than slumber sees"; and, as the experience encompasses him, he proclaims, "I sleep not," "I sleep not" (stanzas 31 and 32, 137 and 138). Similarly, he does not die. He has been aware of and apprehensive of the traditional consequence of man's encountering Pan: "His lips shall straiten and close as a dead man's must, /His heart shall be sealed as the voice of a frost-bound stream" (stanza 5, 128). And: "Yet man should fear lest he see what of old men saw /And withered: yet shall I quail if thy breath smite me" (stanza 21, 134). Yet, when the experience is upon him, he discovers that "Light wounds not, darkness blinds not, my steadfast eyes" (stanza 32, 138).[215] His own experience affirms that the "goal of delight and life is one" (stanza 36, 139) and that heaven is earth once the "shadows that sundered them here take flight" (stanza 39, 140).[216]

As established previously, the individual's encounter with Pan is presented as the union between the poet and Pan's nymph. "Nympolepsy" is as central to the poem as the "panic" of Pan and, indeed, is altered in meaning because Swinburne has connected it, or reconnected it, with the myths of Pan. Nympholepsy, as it is defined by the O.E.D., is the rapture or ecstasy which is inspired in man by the sight of a nymph. It is mentioned by both Shelley and Byron, and it is, as other critics of "A Nympholept" have suggested, usually linked with Platonic *eros* or the divine madness which is described by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* while he is inspired by Pan and the nymphs, and in the *Ion* and the *Symposium*.[217] Nympholepsy is, therefore, also associated with the longing for the unattainable realm of the ideal, the realm for which the heavenly maiden is a common symbol.[218] As such, it may be identified with the longing for and pursuit of the ideal and heavenly maiden in "Alastor" and Endymion. Keats' Endymion is particularly interesting, for it also involves the figure of Pan; in fact, his Endymion becomes a kind of Pan-figure pursuing Diana, or Luna, the moon goddess. Pan and Endymion were sometimes confused in some literary treatments of the myth: Endymion was made the pursuer instead of the pursued in order that the myth could be reconciled with the conception of Diana as the ideal of chastity and that the Platonic implications of the myth could be maintained.[219] In Keats' poem, of course, Endymion is a follower of Pan, but he feels he must leave Pan's domain for that of Diana, until he learns that she and the Indian maid are one.[220]

Perhaps even more important than these expressions of the longing for the ideal, imaged as a woman, are Browning's reflections on this Romantic theme in a poem which he entitled "Numpholeptos" (1876).[221] To a puzzled Browning Society, the poet explained that the meaning of the poem is implicit in its title -- "caught or rapt by a nymph" rather than a "woman lover."[222] Although he suggests that the poem has no "metaphysical" implications and that the imagery is his own, the nymph he presents here is the ideal heavenly maiden of Romantic poetry, and the imagery with which he describes her is Shelley's. She has a "silver smile" and is associated with the moon; she exists above the "clay" of body and earth, and her chaste and "blank pure soul" is the "source" and the "tomb" of the "prismatic glow" of earth.[223] Furthermore, his suggestion to the Browning Society that the poem is a warning that such an "impossible ideal object of love" must be an "imaginary" creature and not a real woman bears some resemblance to Shelley's prefatory remarks in "Alastor."

Although such poems as "Alastor" and Endymion are warnings against the desire to inhabit a heavenly realm which is separate from the world of earth and human sympathies, Shelley and Keats were also, as established earlier, occasionally drawn to such a realm and did put forward a transcendent source. Swinburne, who was opposed to such a source, deliberately negates the association of nympholepsy with the realm of the ideal. Obviously remembering such myths as Diana's punishment of Actaeon and clearly linking them with Pan's legendary destruction of those who viewed him or disturbed him at noon, Swinburne proclaims that he encounters the nymph and lives:

> An earth-born dreamer, constrained by the bonds of birth.
> Held fast by the flesh, compelled by his veins that beat
> And kindle to rapture or wrath, to desire or to mirth,
> May hear not surely the fall of immortal feet,
> May feel not surely if heaven upon earth be sweet;
> And here is my sense fulfilled of the joys of earth,
> Light, silence, bloom, shade, murmur of leaves that meet.
> (stanza 34, 138-139)

Furthermore, again perhaps remembering Keats, Swinburne also proclaims that the nymph herself is "earth-born":

> Earth-born, or mine eye were withered that sees, mine ear
> That hears were stricken to death by the sense divine,
> Earth-born I know thee: but heaven is about me here.
> (stanza 38, 140)

Swinburne thus restores the nymph to her original connection with Pan and the fecund powers of earth rather than with the chaste moon goddess, Diana. In the Orphic hymn "To the Nymphs," translated by Thomas Taylor, the nymphs are "Nurses of Bacchus [sic.] secret-coursing pow'r, /Who fruits sustain, and nourish ev'ry flow'r." They may be found "With Pan exulting on the mountains [sic.] height."[224] And in Taylor's translation of the "Hymn to Pan," the "Bacchanalian Pan" is attended by "sportive nymphs": "The Hours and Seasons, wait thy high command, /And round thy throne in graceful order stand."[225] This is exactly the role that the nymph assumes in Swinburne's poem. She is associated with the "perfect hour" (stanza 2, 127) of peace and light[226] and with the summer season, when all things attain perfection and "the face of the warm bright world is the face of a flower" (stanza 2, 127). In fact, when the poet encounters the "[u]nknown sweet spirit" -- "A form, a face, a wonder to sense and sight" (stanza 31, 138) -- he associates her with "Bloom, fervour, and perfume of grasses and flowers aglow" (stanza 35, 139).[227] And the moment at which he "lean[s] [his] face to the heather, and drink[s] the sun /Whose flame-lit odour satiates the flowers" (stanza 36, 139) is the moment of consummation and union with nature.[228] It may be suggested, then, that the nymph is the "flower" of the world, and (particularly when recalling the "multitudinous bloom" of flowers in the "noonshine" of "The Lake of Gaube") that she is the "form" or "face" of nature, while Pan is its "indeterminate" force or "breath" of life.[229]

At this particular moment the face of nature is perfect, but part of the experience of union is, once again, the poet's recognition of change and the continual contraries of life. As he says earlier in the poem, "So mild seems now thy [Pan's] secret and speechless law, /So fair and fearless and faithful and godlike she" (stanza 21, 134); yet he knows that man may not "soothe or subdue the God [Pan] who has change to wife: /And life with death is as morning with evening wed" (stanza 26, 136). And when he encounters Pan's nymph he accepts that perfection passes:

> I lean my face to the heather, and drink the sun
>   Whose flame-lit odour satiates the flowers: mine eyes
> Close, and the goal of delight and of life is one:

No more I crave of earth or her kindred skies.
No more? But the joy that springs from them smiles and flies:
The sweet work wrought of them surely, the good work done,
If the mind and the face of the season be loveless, dies.
(stanza 36, 139)[230]

Indeed, he identifies his nymph not only with summer, but with all Seasons: she is the

Unknown sweet spirit, whose vesture is soft in spring,
In summer splendid, in autumn pale as the wood
That shudders and wanes and shrinks as a shamed thing should,
In winter bright as the mail of a war-worn king
Who stands where foes fled far from the face of him stood.
(stanza 37, 140)

As such, she is much like the Venus that Tannhäuser was unable to accept, the Venus who was the "inner flower of fire" and whose "strewings of the ways wherein she trod /Were the twain seasons of the day and night."[231]

Swinburne's "[u]nknown sweet spirit" is more than the face of nature; she is also, as is Pan, a force within man. As the poet himself asks,

My spirit or thine is it, breath of thy life or of mine,
Which fills my sense with a rapture that casts out fear?
(stanza 38, 140)[232]

As such, she is much like Hesperia, the daughter of both Venus and Proserpine and, as we established in Chapter III, a symbol of the divine energies of the unconscious mind.[233] As Jung suggests, the nymph is often a symbol of the anima and is connected with the early stages of psychic reintegration or individuation.[234] Hesperia, of course, is also a nymph, and she is described by Swinburne in much the same imagery as the nymph is here.[235] The poet's ride with Hesperia is the equivalent of his union with the nymph, and in both poems he has discovered that heaven is earth.

The figure of the nymph here is the only woman figure in the later "nature poems" which closely corresponds to Hesperia. However, as we have seen, these poems do trace the same psychological process of the individual's reintegration with the energies of nature and of his own mind that is presented in "Hesperia." And they are also true to the ideas of "Hertha." The nature poems present the individual's "loving embrace of truly present existence," to quote Nietzsche again, and not, as Wendell Stacy Johnson suggests, the "self-consuming" merger with "primal unity" that has been associated here with the "drowning" impulse of Schopenhauer or Wagner.

In the next chapter, one of Swinburne's central works, "Tristram of Lyonesse," will be examined in order to show that the poem confirms the ideas of "Hertha" and that Tristram's individual experiences confirm the "Hesperia" pattern, and, most specifically, to show how Swinburne differs from Wagner and Schopenhauer. As we have suggested, Nietzsche disapproved of the philosophy implicit in Wagner's treatment of the Tristram legend. If he had read Swinburne's poem, he would have approved of many of the philosophic implications of this treatment of the love of Tristram and Iseult.

Chapter V: TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Swinburne's long poem on the Tristram legend was at first to be entitled "Tristram and Iseult";[1] however, as he worked on it, the psychological progression or "moral history"[2] of the hero became central to the poem and it was renamed "Tristram of Lyonesse."[3] The poem presents, through Tristram, the same process of the individual's reconciliation with the forces of nature that is presented in "Hesperia" and the later "nature poems," and the same conception of nature that is presented in "Hertha." It is therefore a central work in the Swinburne canon. Swinburne himself declared "Tristram of Lyonesse" "the best I have to give" (a remark which he also made of "Hertha"); and Vivante, one critic who has delved deeply into Swinburne's thought, considers it "by far the best of his poems."[4]

Swinburne's poem is also of central significance to the treatment of the Tristram legend in English literature. As Samuel Chew, in his critical analysis of Swinburne's works, proclaims: "All competent judges agree, whatever qualifications they feel compelled to make, that Swinburne's is incomparably the finest rendering of the legend in English literature."[5] And M.W. MacCallum, in his general study of the "Arthurian story" from the sixteenth century onward, is one critic who agrees: "It was impossible for the old love-romance to find among English-speaking men a more sympathetic or unprejudiced interpreter. None was better suited to do justice to its pathos and passion . . . ."[6] As MacCallum and others indicate, there had actually been little interest in the Tristram legend — or in the "matter of Arthur" as a whole -- after Malory and until the "Celtic revival" in the later eighteenth century. Arthur had been present in English poetry only in allegorical form, and Tristram had been almost entirely absent until the nineteenth century.[7] The first major work on the Tristram legend was Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult" (1852); it was followed by Tennyson's "The Last Tournament" (1871), Book X of the Idylls. These works had a profound effect on Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse" (1882), but it was almost entirely a negative one. Believing that Arnold had "transformed and recast the old legend" and that Tennyson had "degraded and debased it,"[8] Swinburne attempted to produce a major work, perhaps even a rival to the Idylls as a whole, that would be true to both the spirit and the matter of the Tristram legend.[9]

There is some truth in Swinburne's estimation of the two previous attempts to portray the love of Tristram and Iseult, and later criticism has tended to support him.[10] Arnold was relatively unfamiliar with the medieval sources of the story, working only from Théodore de la Villemarqué's resume in the Revue de Paris (1841) and perhaps also from Dunlop's History of Prose Fiction,[11] and he altered the story in several important details. Most significantly, his Tristram not only consummates his marriage to Iseult of Brittany or of The White Hands, the "sweetest Christian soul alive" and the "patient flower,"[12] but also has two children by her. Arnold sympathetically focuses on this Iseult and her quiet world, and he ends his poem with a picture of her caring for her children and telling them the story of Merlin and Vivian, as if, as MacCallum suggests, it were a "fragment of Breton folklore" rather than something that "took place only a few years before." MacCallum's rather disparaging summary of the "main points of contact" between Arnold's poem and the old legend is that "the hero's wife loves him and . . . he prefers another man's."[13] Swinburne's own criticism is less blunt but equally telling: he writes to Arnold, reminding him that he has always "delight[ed]" in his poetry, and suggesting that he has only undertaken to "rehandle the story" because it was "so radically altered in its main points by your conception and treatment of that subject, and especially of the circumstances which bring about the catastrophe in all the old French forms of the romance, that the field was really open to a new writer . . . ."[14] In his own poem he subtly reminds Arnold that the alternative represented by Iseult of Brittany was not taken by Tristram:

> Fierce regret
> And bitter loyalty strove hard at strife
> With amorous pity toward the tender wife
> That wife indeed might never be, to wear
> The very crown of wedlock; never bear
> Children, to watch and worship her white hair
> When time should change, with hand more soft than snow,
> The fashion of its glory; never know
> The loveliness of laughing love that lives
> On little lips of children: all that gives
> Glory and grace and reverence and delight
> To wedded woman by her bridal right[.][15]

He also presents the older and more tragic ending of the black and white sails[16] -- and, as one might expect, an entirely different view of Arnold's sweet and Christian Iseult of Brittany.

By altering the facts and the focus of the story, Arnold, of course, also alters its spirit. It may be suggested that Arnold was temperamentally unsuited to treat this story of essential and elemental passion. The remarks about the effect of passion which his narrator makes could be taken for Arnold's own, particularly if they are read in conjunction with the Marguerite poems:

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
How this fool passion gulls men potently;
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,
And an unnatural overheat at best.[17]

Passionate love, the narrator suggests, is one of those all-excluding, "tyrannous single thoughts " which consume and destroy man.[18] Yet, as the poem demonstrates in the figure of the second Iseult, those who live a less passionate and single-minded existence are also ultimately consumed, by the "gradual furnace of the world":

'tis the gradual furnace of the world,
In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd
Until they crumble, or else grow like steel --
Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring --
Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
But takes away the power[.][19]

In other poems, Arnold calls these two alternatives those of the "madman" and the "slave"; in his "Tristram and Iseult," they are embodied in the figures of the dark-haired Iseult of Ireland (another modification to the legend) and the golden-haired Iseult of Brittany. But both alternatives lead to the same end; accordingly, the two Iseults are now amazingly alike.[20] The passionate Iseult of Ireland has lived a life dedicated to a "single tyrannous" passion but is now a more subdued and gentle woman. She wishes to nurse Tristram as a mother would, and to tell him old tales as Iseult of Brittany does to her children. As she says to Tristram,

Fear me not, I will be always with thee;
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain;
Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,
Join'd at evening of their days again.[21]

And when she lies dead with Tristram, the sweet charm of her face is compared to that of Iseult of Brittany: she has achieved "A tranquil, settled loveliness, /Her younger rival's purest grace."[22] Arnold seems unable to envision a lasting and positive joy in life, but he does seem to prefer the tranquil alternative of Iseult of Brittany. Although her continued existence is a subdued and dull daily round, each day the "exact repeated effigy"[23] of the previous one, there is a certain distanced contentment about it with which Arnold is in sympathy.[24]

Analyses which examine Arnold's use of myth to explore personal and cultural concerns need not be so disparaging as analyses (like that of MacCallum) which focus on Arnold's deviation from the traditional legend. This suggestion may also be made of Tennyson's treatment of Tristram. "The Last Tournament" should be considered in the context of the Idylls as a whole and as a part of Tennyson's presentation of the disintegration of the ideals which Arthur had actualized in Camelot by the growing rift between sense and spirit.[25] "The Holy Grail" depicts the social disintegration that is caused by the individual's quest for the purely spiritual -- even though Tennyson and his Arthur do admire the purity of Galahad and do believe in the "Reality of the Unseen."[26] And "The Last Tournament" shows the breakdown of the momentary, "musical"[27] synthesis of Camelot by the solely sensual impulse -- for which Tennyson and his Arthur have little admiration. Tennyson employs the love of Tristram and Iseult as a thematic parallel to the love of Lancelot and Guinevere and as an indication of how this love has affected the whole court. In this book, Arthur's kingdom sinks "back to the beast" and to the condition of the forest embodied in Tristram himself:

> newly-entered, taller than the rest,
> And armoured all in forest green, whereon
> There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,

And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle -- Tristram -- . . . .[28]

Tristram has returned to Arthur's court in order to participate in the last tournament -- literally a tournament of dead innocence and idealism, as the prize is a ruby necklace belonging to a child found dead in the forest. Fittingly, Lancelot presides over the tournament and Tristram of the Woods not only wins the red rubies but also decides to bestow them upon his paramour, Mark's Queen Isolt.[29] The meeting between Tristram and Isolt has none of the tragic dimensions of the old story. It is marred by the distrust between them, for they both know that they keep to no external vows of faith and honour. Isolt, who is presented as a bitter, aging, and despairing woman, pleads with Tristram to maintain at least the illusion of endless passion:

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I believe.

And:

Swear to me thou wilt love me even when old,
Gray-haired, and past desire, and in despair.

But Tristram answers,

Vows! did you keep the vow you made to Mark
More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay, but learnt,
The vow that binds too quickly snaps itself --
My knighthood taught me this -- . . . .[30]

Tristram considers that the vows which held together Arthur's court have "served their use, their time" and now have passed, that they were impossible for a man of "flesh and blood" to keep.[31] He returns to the celebration of the laws of the forest:

we are not angels here
Nor shall be: vows -- I am woodman of the woods,

> And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
> Mock them: my soul, we love but while we may[.][32]

He refers here to the new song which he had "made in the woods" and had sung at Arthur's court as a replacement for the "broken music" of Arthur:

> New leaf, new life -- the days of frost are o'er:
> New life, new love, to suit the newer day:
> New loves are sweet as those that went before:
> Free love -- free field -- we love but while we may.[33]

This new measure is not only one of changing passionate love but also one of bestial violence. Such violence claims Tristram himself: as he presents Isolt with the rubies, he is felled from behind by Mark. "Mark's way," a phrase Tennyson has consistently employed as a contrast to Arthur's civilized and ordered way, has triumphed.[34]

Swinburne does consider "The Last Tournament" in the context of the _Idylls_ as a whole, but he finds the whole work deficient in both its morality and its artistry. Indeed, he was so incensed by Tennyson's handling of the Arthurian story that he was "stimulated to fresh Arthurian exertion by the completion of Tennyson's Morte d'Albert," as he called it. He "fell . . . tooth and nail upon Tristram and Iseult," proclaiming that if his "first sustained attempt at a poetic narrative . . . doesn't lick the Morte d'Albert I hope I may not die without extreme unction."[35] This is exactly what Swinburne felt Tennyson's work had too much of -- extreme unction. Comparing "old Mallory's" "gallant, honest, kindly, faulty creature" to Tennyson's "blameless" and self-righteous hero, he suggests that Tennyson "took the very lowest view of virtue" and that "the tone of divine or human doctrine . . . exalted in [the _Idylls_], directly or indirectly, was poor, mean, paltry, petty, almost base; so utterly insufficient as to be little short of ignoble . . . ."[36] Behind this comment is not only Swinburne's conception of morality but also his theory of tragedy: Tennyson did not achieve the nobility of tragedy because he conceived of his hero as a saintlike man and consequently neglected the role of fate in Arthur's downfall:

> Wishing to make his central figure the noble and perfect symbol of an ideal man, he has removed not merely the excuse but the explanation of the fatal and tragic loves of Launcelot and Guenevere. The hinge of the whole legend of the Round Table, from its first glory to its final fall, is the incestuous birth of Mordred from the connexion of Arthur with his half-sister, unknowing and unknown. . . . Remove . . . the plea which leaves the heroine less sinned against indeed than sinning, but yet not too base for tragic compassion and interest, and there remains merely the presentation of a vulgar adulteress. . . . Mr. Tennyson has lowered the note and deformed the outline of the Arthurian story, by reducing Arthur to the level of a wittol, Guenevere to the level of a woman of intrigue, and Launcelot to the level of a 'correspondent.' Treated as he has treated it, the story is rather a case for the divorce-court than for poetry.[37]

Tennyson tried to make his hero perfect, too perfect for a tragic hero by Aristotelean definition, by ignoring what to him would be a major spiritual flaw and what to Swinburne is a fatal oversight like that of Oedipus; ironically, by doing so Tennyson actually made Arthur too low to be a tragic hero:

> by the very excision of what may have seemed in his eyes a moral blemish Mr. Tennyson has blemished the whole story; by the very exaltation of his hero as something more than man he has left him in the end something less. The keystone of the whole building is removed, and in place of a tragic house of song where even sin had all the dignity and beauty that sin can retain, and without which it can afford no fit material for tragedy, we find an incongruous edifice of tradition and invention where even virtue is made to seem either imbecile or vile. The story as it stood of old had in it something almost of Hellenic dignity and significance; in it as in the Greek legends we could trace from a seemingly small root of evil the birth and growth of a calamitous fate, not sent by mere malvolence [sic.] of heaven, yet in its awful weight and mystery of darkness apparently out of all due retributive proportion to the careless sin or folly of presumptuous weakness which first incurred its infliction; so that by mere hasty resistance and return of violence for violence

> a noble man may unwittingly bring on himself and all his house the curse denounced on parricide, by mere casual indulgence of light love and passing wantonness a hero king may unknowingly bring on himself and all his kingdom the doom imposed on incest. This presence and imminence of Ate inevitable as invisible throughout the tragic course of action can alone confer on such a story the proper significance and the necessary dignity; without it the action would want meaning and the passion would want nobility . . . .[38]

Because the main characters are so ignoble, Swinburne continues, Tennyson was obliged to "degrade all the other figures in the legend." He focuses on Tennyson's handling of Vivien (who in Tennyson's version has learned all her wiles at Mark's court). He claims that Vivien is not an offense to middle-class morality but a revelation of the offensiveness of this morality. Indicating his awareness that she has been considered "the very type and model of a beautiful and fearful temptress of the flesh, the very embodied and ennobled ideal of danger and desire, . . . [by] the virtuous journalist who grows sick with horror and disgust at the licence of other French and English writers," he suggests that she is, instead, "about the most base and repulsive person ever set forth in serious literature." Comparing her to such figures as Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Milton's Dalilah, he maintains that such "heroines of sin are evil, but noble in their evil way; it is the utterly ignoble quality of Vivien which makes her so unspeakably repulsive and unfit for artistic treatment." He continues:

> The Femmes Damnées of Baudelaire may be worthier of hell-fire than a common harlot like this, but that side of their passion which would render them amenable to the notice of the nearest station is not what is kept before us throughout that condemned poem; it is an infinite perverse refinement, an infinite reverse aspiration, 'the end of which things is death'; and from the barren places of unsexed desire the tragic lyrist points them at last along their downward way . . . where the shadows of things perverted shall toss and turn for ever in a Dantesque cycle and agony of changeless change.[39]

His remarks on Vivien are in keeping with his conviction that art must be free to deal with any subject, even the purely sensual, but that it must give its subject artistic form and touch.[40] They are also in keeping with his own conception of the truth and terrible grandeur of the elemental passions and of the same force working within nature.[41] Finally, they, and the remarks on Arthur, imply that Tennyson is a dualist, splitting spirit from sense and attempting to elevate one and degrade the other rather than showing that they are one, and therefore succeeding in degrading both.[42]

In his own work on Tristram, Swinburne subtly reinforces this direct criticism of Tennyson's work. In the first canto, "The Sailing of the Swallow," his Tristram tells the young and innocent Iseult the story of the impending fate of Arthur and his kingdom caused by Mordred's birth. When Arthur slept with Morgause of Orkney, "wittingly he sinned no more than youth /May sin and be assoiled of God and truth, /Repenting"; for he knew not "The bitter bond of blood between them two."

> "Yet in sooth
> His age shall bear the burdens of his youth
> And bleed from his own bloodshed; for indeed
> Blind to him blind his sister brought forth seed,
> And of the child between them shall be born
> Destruction: so shall God not suffer scorn,
> Nor in men's souls and lives his law lie dead." (I, 24 and 25)[43]

In the same canto, Tristram also tells Iseult about the love of Launcelot and Guenevere, linking it with Arthur's youthful folly and giving it a sense of ultimate fatality.[44] In Swinburne's work, the love of Tristram and Iseult is also linked with fate, the powerful force which Swinburne saw working in the tragedies of Aeschylus and Shakespeare and which he himself presented as the force of nature in the figures of Hertha and Pan.[45] Vivien is also mentioned in the first canto by Tristram, but she differs substantially from Tennyson's figure. Here Nimue, as Swinburne calls her, is truly a fay, a spirit of nature much like Pan's nymph; she is the mother of Launcelot, the lover of Pelleas, and the destroyer of Merlin.[46] However, her destruction of Merlin is a benevolent one, as he is released from the burden of eternal, conscious wisdom and returned to the forces of nature. Merlin, who is given the "sleep as kind as death" (I, 29) by Nimue, achieves the alternative unavailable to Venus's Christian knight, Tannhäuser. He

> "Takes his strange rest at heart of slumberland,
> More deep asleep in Broceliande
> Than shipwrecked sleepers in the soft green sea
> Beneath the weight of wandering waves: but he
> Hath for those roofing waters overhead
> Above him always all the summer spread
> Or all the winter wailing . . . ." (VI, 98)

His "spirit" is "mixed with things of elder life than ours" and, with Nimue, he is "Part of that life that feeds the world with love":

> "Yea, heart in heart is molten, hers and his,
> Into the world's heart and the soul that is
> Beyond or sense or vision; and their breath
> Stirs the soft springs of deathless life and death,
> Death that bears life, and change that brings forth seed
> Of life to death and death to life indeed,
> As blood recircling through the unsounded veins
> Of earth and heaven with all their joys and pains."
> (VI, 99)

Swinburne gives us no explicit criticism of Tennyson's use of the Tristram legend itself, other than that he had "degraded and debased it." But his remarks concerning the Idylls as a whole may be applied to "The Last Tournament," and his whole poem may be considered as an attempt to present an alternative vision to Tennyson's: one which prefers natural passions to religious forces (and the social values based on them), and which shows the link between sense and spirit.[47]

In order to be true to the spirit and matter of the legend, to make his poem "acceptable for its orthodoxy and fidelity to the dear old story,"[48] Swinburne turned to other and older sources than Malory, Tennyson's main source. In Malory, the love of Tristram and Isode is not entirely condemned, but it is certainly not the controlling center of Tristram's story. For Malory, Tristram is first and foremost a knight of Arthur's Round Table; as Margaret Reid suggests, "Tristram's passion for Isoud appears and reappears like a scarlet thread in the design, but is not the main *motif*. The central scene is not the passionate scene of the magic philtre but the elaborate ceremony in which Tristram is received as a knight in Arthur's court."[49] Malory's own source, probably a now lost version of the French prose *Tristran*, was late in the tradition and therefore, as Bruce maintains,

> the old Celtic story of loveless and irresistible passion, with all the primitive elements . . . which had continued to cling to it even in the hands of the French metrical romancers was now diluted with innumerable episodes that reflected the occupations, tastes and ideals of French lords and ladies in the first half of the thirteenth century -- endless descriptions of jousts and tournaments, knight-errant adventures, love affairs conducted in the fashion of a highly-organized society. . . -- and so on.[50]

Swinburne eliminates these later accretions, returning to the "French metrical romancers" and retaining from Malory only the general connection of the Tristram legend with the Arthurian material (also in Béroul), the fight with Palamede, Tristram's escape from Mark's knights by leaping into the sea, and the description of Joyous Gard. His primary sources are the extant fragments of Béroul and Thomas which were presented in Francisque Michel's *Tristran: Recueil de ce qui rest des poëmes relatifs a ses aventures composés en françois, en anglo-normand et en grec, dans les XII et XIII siècles*,[51] and the

Middle-English Sir Tristrem, derived from Thomas, which was edited by Sir Walter Scott in 1804.[52] But he was familiar with other versions, as well.[53] His version is closest to that of Thomas, perhaps the most sympathetic treatment of the lovers:[54] Swinburne's treatment of the love potion, the joyful interlude in the forest, Tristram's deliberation over the calls of lust and loyalty when he marries the second Iseult, and his fatal wound while rescuing the lady of his namesake, Tristran le Nain, is, for instance, similar to that of Thomas. Here too, however, he leaves out or condenses many of the incidents which are presented by Thomas and other early writers. As he said himself, "I shan't of course include -- much less tell at length saga-fashion -- a tithe of the various incidents given in the different old versions . . . ."[55] For example, he omits such incidents as Iseult's plot against Brangwain, Tristram and Iseult's clever deception of Mark while they are still at court, Iseult's ordeal, and Tristram's building a fair hall and erecting in it a gold statue of Iseult while he is absent from her. And he condenses into a brief flashback all the events preceding Tristram's return to Cornwall with Iseult for Mark. All incidents extraneous to the love between Tristram and Iseult are minimized so that the focus may be on the force of this love; all art and artifice is minimized so that the lovers may be presented in a sympathetic light and their love linked with the forces of nature. Some incidents are included to establish Tristram in his active role as a knight -- the battle with the giant Urgan and with the abductors of the lady of the second Tristram, for example -- but the focus is on their passionate love in nature and what that love teaches them about the nature of existence.[56]

In his reduction of the story to its essential core, the passionate love of Tristram and Iseult, Swinburne is at one with Wagner. Indeed, Wagner (whose source was Gottfried von Strassburg) reduces the story even further, entirely omitting the second Iseult. In Act I, his Tristan and Isolde accidentally drink the love potion while travelling across the sea to Cornwall; in Act II, they meet in the garden by Marke's castle, express their love and ardent longing for eternal union, and are discovered by Marke; in Act III, Tristan, fatally wounded by Melot, who has betrayed them to Marke, awaits by his ancestral castle for Isolde, and when she reaches him they achieve the desired-for union in death. As Ernest Newman comments, "Of ordinary stage incident there is exceedingly little in the opera; it is virtually unnecessary, for the veritable drama is not in what 'happens' to Tristan and Isolde in the world of reality but in what evolves within themselves, and this is revealed to us principally in his music."[57]

Wagner himself speaks of his desire to avoid "[a]ll that detailed description and exhibition of the historic-conventional" necessary to "the historical novelist or dramatist of our times" and of his decision to turn to myth and legend, in which the forces working deep within all men and within the world are laid bare:

> The legend, in whatever age or nation it occurs, has the merit of seizing nothing but the human content of that age or nation, and of giving forth that content in a form peculiar to itself, of sharpest outline, and therefore swiftly understandable. . . . This legendary colouring, for the display of a purely human event, has in particular the real advantage of uncommonly facilitating the task . . . of silencing the question "Why"? Just as through the characteristic scene, so also in the legendary tone, the mind is forthwith placed in that dreamlike state wherein it presently shall come to full clairvoyance, and thus perceive a new coherence in the world's phenomena; a coherence it could not

> detect with the waking eye of everyday . . . . How music is at last fully to round this quickening spell, you will now lightly comprehend.[58]

This remark is particularly relevant to his Tristan and Isolde. As Newman indicates, Wagner criticized Karl Ritter's outline for a drama on the same subject because the essence of the legend was "lost in the picturesque details"; what was required, instead, was "a concentration on the external and tragic core of it, with the employment of no more incident than would be necessary to show this core in conflict with the world of material reality,"[59] the "night" of passionate union in conflict with the "light" of "everyday" and illusory values, to use the imagery of the opera and of Wagner's general comment on legend. Wagner also indicates that his Tristan was the culmination of his turning from outward circumstance to inward reality:

> Here, in perfect trustfulness, I plunged into the inner depths of the soul's events, and from out this inmost center of the world I fearlessly built up its outer form. A glance at the volumen of this poem will show you at once that the exhaustive detail-work which a historical poet is obliged to devote to clearing up the outward bearings of his plot, to the detriment of a lucid exposition of its inner motives, I now trusted myself to apply to these latter alone.[60]

As we have seen in Chapter IV, Swinburne also attempts, through myth or through the music of his poetry, to penetrate to the same inward depths of man and nature that Wagner does. Although they are less suggestive in tone than Wagner's comments, his specific remarks on "Tristram of Lyonesse" in his "Dedicatory Epistle" to the collected poems point in the same direction. His purpose, he says, was to present the legend "not in the epic or romantic form of sustained or continuous narrative" but in the form of "a succession of dramatic scenes" with "descriptive settings," the scenes themselves "being of the simplest construction, duologue or monologue." And in answering the objection that the philosophic meditations of his hero "on man and nature, life and death, chance and destiny" are out of keeping with the primitive period of the legend, he reminds his critics that he deals with legend: he made no attempt to "treat the legend as in any possible sense historical or capable of either rational or ideal association with history, such as would assimilate the name and fame of Arthur to the name and fame of any actual and indisputable Alfred or Albert of the future." As we shall see, Swinburne makes his central figures and the impulses they embody as archetypal as Wagner's.[61]

Swinburne's general knowledge of and interest in Wagner (mentioned briefly in Chapter II) has been established by Francis Jacques Sypher. Sypher also definitely establishes the specific influence of Wagner on Swinburne's Tristram poem. As he notes, Swinburne acknowledges in a letter to Burne-Jones that the "thought" of Wagner's music "ought to abash but does stimulate" him in composing his own work, certainly as much as did the original sources and his reaction against Tennyson's debased version.[62] Wagner's opera (composed by 1859 and presented in 1865 in Munich) was not performed in its entirety in England until 1882. But Swinburne had heard a performance of the "Prelude" by 1872 and, indeed, soon after appears to have written a poem in French on the "effect of Wagner's overture to Tristan" for the Renaissance, a French journal.[63] He also probably had read the complete text of the opera in his copy of Quatre poèmes d'opéras, a translation of Wagner into French done by Challemel-Lacour in 1861.[64] He certainly had read Gasperini's thorough study of the opera in La Nouvelle Allemagne Musicale: Richard Wagner (1866)[65] and Francis Hueffer's outline of it in Wagner and the Music of the Future (1874).[66]

Swinburne's and Wagner's works on Tristram are not only similar in their reduction of the legend to its essentials (Swinburne, of course, considering the second Iseult central to the original story and to his own purposes) and in their presentation of the essential nature of passion and its link with fate and the will of the world. They are also similar in technique. The musical nature of Swinburne's works has been suggested in Chapter IV and is best summarized in Rosenberg's words:

> Swinburne is a poet not of natural objects but of natural energies -- of winds and surging waters. His scale is macrocosmic, his focus less upon . . . things seen than forces felt. . . . His poetry moves away from the art of painting and toward the art of music; after reading Swinburne one retains not an image but a tonality and a rhythm.[67]

And Swinburne's general conception of the "song" of the universe and of the combination of "music" and "art" which wakens "[s]oul within sense" should also be recalled here.[68] In terms of "Tristram" itself, the connection with Wagner's music has been generally acknowledged and frequently examined in some detail. Zuckerman, for instance, suggests a general parallel between the two compositions in his study of the reception and influence of Wagner's Tristan: "Closest in England to Wagner's 'infinite melody'" is Swinburne's "long nephelidian line," his "sea of words."[69] And John D. Reed gives a more specific indication of the parallels in his study of Swinburne's poem: "In Tristram of Lyonesse, the employment of recurrent words as motifs, the recapitulation of rhymes, the very use of the term 'Prelude' to introduce the composition, imply a genuine identification with the art of music itself" and particularly with "Wagner's musical technique . . . such as the [use of] the leitmotiv."[70]

Rosenberg also provides us with a good summary of the general similarities between Swinburne's poem and Wagner's opera:

> Tristram is undervalued largely because the wrong demands have been made upon it. As a narrative or as a drama of action the poem inevitably disappoints, in precisely the ways that Wagner's Tristan und Isolde disappoints. In both of these essentially lyrical re-creations of the legend, action and characterization are wholly subordinate to the all-absorbing theme of love. Just as there are no independent arias in Tristan, so there are no striking images in Tristram that are not repeated as leitmotifs and thus reabsorbed into the enveloping texture of the verse. The Londoner who read Swinburne's poem upon its publication in 1882 and then, just one month later, heard the English premier of Wagner's music drama might well have felt a certain déjà entendu.[71]

The similarities in idea and technique between the two versions are undeniable, and are particularly obvious if the works are compared to those of Arnold and Tennyson. There may also be instances of Wagner's direct influence on Swinburne's handling of specific incidents.[72] However, it is my contention that there is a subtle but significant difference between their interpretations of the ultimate meaning of the myth, particularly between what the lovers' passion signifies and consequently what the characters learn about the nature of existence.

This difference may be suggested by examining the meaning of the myth put forward by Denis de Rougemont and by Joseph Campbell, two critics who examine its place in the course of western culture. In Love in the Western World, de Rougemont uses the Tristram story as one of his central examples of the "inescapable conflict in the west between passion and marriage."[73] The passion which he describes is ultimately a death-desire, an other-worldly impulse, and the woman is a symbol of this other world. It is not to be confused with "profane or natural" love, which is an expression of the love of the temporal world and of an individual woman,[74] or with Christian mysticism, which is epitalamian rather than unitive mysticism and thus leads the soul back into the world and the agape principle of good works.[75] Its roots are, instead, in the dualism of Platonism, which views eros as an ascent to the realm of the Ideal; of the Indo-European mythologies, which present a fundamental struggle between the gods of good and evil, Day and Night; and of Manichaeism, which links Night with the created world and Light with the release from the original sin of creation and from the individual's bondage to the flesh. In the twelfth century, de Rougemont contends, it expressed itself in the heresy of Catharism (derived from third century Manichaeism) and in the connected cult of courtly love. To de Rougemont, the story of Tristram and Iseult is the finest embodiment of this heretical ideal of eros; Gottfried was particularly aware of its implications and therefore enhanced the fundamental dualism of the story.[76] Gottfried's love potion links Tristram and Iseult both to the world of the individual and the temporal and to the world of the uncreated and the ideal. Tristram's only fault is to mistake eros for the natural love for an individual woman and therefore momentarily to "profane" "courtly mysticism," to be unfaithful to the "mystic virtue of the Pure" by consummating his love.[77] His real longing is not for Iseult but for the realm of uncreated Light, and he later sets obstacles in the way of immediate fulfillment (the sword which they place between them, for example), so that he may escape life and achieve union in death.[78]

Joseph Campbell cannot comprehend de Rougemont's association of the Tristram legend with the Catharist heresy. As he says in his Creative Mythology,

> I find it impossible to understand how anyone who had really read both the literature of Gnosticism and the poetry of Gottfried could suggest -- as does a recent student of the psychology of amor -- that not only Gottfried but also other Tristan poets, and the troubadours as well, were Manichaeans.[79]

To Campbell, the Tristram story is, instead, a central embodiment of the impulse to deny socially-sanctioned religious truths, which were themselves dualistic and other-worldly,[80] and to affirm individual truth and the pains and pleasures of existence in the temporal world. This impulse both anticipates the Renaissance spirit and returns to Celtic origins.[81] Campbell maintains that "the troubadours, minnesingers, and epic poets of the [twelfth] century, in their celebration of amor, remained in Nietzsche's sense 'true to this earth' . . ."[82] and that the Tristram poets, if they must be linked with a heresy, should be associated with the Pelagian rather than the Gnostic or the Manichaean.

> . . . Pelagius and his followers absolutely rejected the doctrine of our inheritance of the sin of Adam and Eve, and taught that we have finally no need of supernatural grace . . . of a miraculous redemption, but only of awakening and maturation . . . .[83]

Accordingly, to Campbell, the love potion in Gottfried's version is not the desire for death but the impulse to risk "eternal death" or damnation in order to celebrate natural love, which is of both body and soul and which is directed toward an individual.[84] The love-grotto, "in the heart of nature . . . without or within,"[85] is their place apart from social values:

> It opens inward toward the mystery of character, destiny, and worth, and at the same time outward, toward the world and the wonder of beauty, where it sets the lover at odds, however, with the moral order. The poet in his Prologue had already dedicated himself, his life and work, to those alone who could bear together in one heart "dear pain" as well as "bitter sweetness"; and . . . it is just this readiness to embrace love's pain along with its rapture that makes the noble heart exceptional.[86]

The tragedy of Tristram and Iseult stems from the fact that they are not entirely committed to the celebration of the natural and the individual, but also strive to maintain social values (as may be seen by their placing the sword between them when they hear Mark approach).[87] "And by striving to pay honour its due while at the same time honoring love, they sacrificed both, and so came finally to that death of which Brangaene had told."[88]

In her intensive study of the principal early versions of the Tristram legend, Joan M. Ferrante agrees substantially with Campbell's interpretation, even though she defines amor somewhat differently. In her opening remarks on the place of the Tristram legend in the Arthurian material, she considers courtly love as a social ideal, embodied in the ethic of Arthurian romance: the courtly ideal is that of an "ennobling love as an inspiration to action within society, which is the norm of Arthurian romance."[89] The love of Tristram and Iseult is outside that norm and is destructive of it because it is "not just an ennobling inspiration, it is also a physical passion that demands fulfillment and destroys prudence." The other force which, to use Tennyson's imagery, breaks Arthur's music, is the Grail quest, which "is a denial of life on earth, or at least of the possibility of achieving an ideal in life, which is the goal of Arthurian romances."[90] Here Ferrante points to the two forces which have been linked with the Tristram legend -- the natural and the individual (Campbell's Tristram) and the other-worldly (de Rougemont's Tristram and Campbell's Grail).

Although de Rougemont's association of the Tristram legend with the other-worldly impulse is generally discredited by other critics,[91] he does point to its implications in some of the later interpretations of the myth. De Rougemont seems to have been particularly influenced by Wagner's treatment of Tristram. Indeed, he considers Wagner's opera to be a "completion" of the myth -- the final bold revelation through the power of music of its essential import.[92] It is also significant to note that Wagner himself linked his Tristan with the quest for the Holy Grail, planning at first that as Tristan lay dying he would be visited by the "Grail-questing, wandering Parzival. For in my thoughts," he continues, "I had identified Tristan, languishing from the wound he had received and yet not able to die of it, with Amfortas of the Grail romance."[93] This is essentially Tristan's desire from the beginning -- to escape from the world through death. In Act I, Tristan has already accepted death but, instead, is led back to the world because of Brangaene's substitution of the love potion for the death potion. In Act II, he indicates in his exchange with Isolde that he longs for the eternal night of death and, when interrupted by the day-world again, deliberately refuses to defend himself against Melot. And in Act III, the longed-for oblivion, delayed again momentarily until Isolde arrives, is finally achieved. As he says in his own notes to the Prelude, the work expresses the endless

> yearning, longing, bliss, and misery of love: world, power, fame, splendor, honor, knighthood, loyalty, and friendship, all scattered like a baseless dream; one thing alone left living: desire, desire unquenchable, longing forever rebearing itself -- a fevered craving; one sole redemption -- death, surcease of being, the sleep that knows no wakening! . . . [I]t is the bliss of quitting life, of being no more, of last redemption into the wondrous realm from which we stray the furthest when we strive to enter it by fiercest force.[94]

The opera is Wagner's first conscious expression of the influence of Schopenhauer and Buddhism; for him, Schopenhauer expressed the "final negation of the desire of life" as the "only salvation," and his

Tristan expressed the same "Nirvana."[95] It has been suggested by some critics that here Wagner actually deviates from Schopenhauer; that he has his lovers "rush to embrace" the "world as will" from which Schopenhauer "advocates withdrawal"; that it is only in subsequent works that he "sought to escape the anguish of individual existence by methods more in tune with Schopenhauer and with Christian thinking."[96] However, as we have established elsewhere, the result of the desire to sleep beneath the dark waves or to ascend to the higher world of light, to sink forever into the arms of the Great Goddess or to achieve absolute union with the Heavenly Maiden, is the same -- the annihilation of life. It was this "life-denying" impulse which Nietzsche had detected in Tristan and had definitely rejected by 1876. Although he had been attracted to the Dionysian nature of Wagner's music, its "everlasting lust of becoming," he began to realize that Wagner put forward not the release from individual consciousness but the destruction of self, the surrender to "suicidal drowning."[97] Wagner was essentially a Romantic "decadent," looking for an escape from the world into some idealistic conception of a world beyond:

> He flatters every nihilistic (Buddhistic) instinct and tags it out in music; he flatters every form of Christianity, every religious expression of decadence. He that hath ears let him hear: everything that has ever grown out of the soil of impoverished life, the whole counterfeit coinage of the transcendental and of a Beyond found its most sublime advocate in Wagner's art, not in formulae (Wagner is too clever to use formulae), but in the persuasion of the senses which in their turn makes the spirit weary and morbid. Music in the form of Circe . . . .[98]

By Parsifal (performed in the same year as "Tristram of Lyonesse" was published, 1882) it was obvious to Nietzsche that Wagner had fallen "helpless and broken on his knees before the Christian cross." Nietzsche travelled on alone, finding "the road to that courageous pessimism which is the opposite of all idealistic falsehood . . . ."[99]

Sypher is of the opinion that Swinburne's conception of the legend of Tristram is similar to Wagner's: "The progress of Swinburne's version, like that of Wagner's, is in the revelation to the lovers that in death lies their salvation and fulfillment. . . . Their love teaches them the impossibility of satisfying their desire in this life, and as a release, they yearn for death."[100] As might be anticipated, Wendell Stacy Johnson is of the same opinion: the lovers experience the "frustration that can be ended only in the peace of death"; here, "[a]gain, the only true consummation of erotic passion is in death, a return to the unity of that great symbolic matrix," the sea.[101] However, Swinburne's conception of the essential spirit of the story is actually like that of Campbell. As Rosenberg suggests, echoing de Rougemont's conception of the Tristram myth, "In this central legend symbolizing the love-sickness of the Western world, Swinburne creates by far his healthiest love poetry."[102] Whether Swinburne only felt the force of Wagner's elemental music or whether, like Nietzsche, he was aware of the ultimate implications of Wagner's opera and consciously deviated from them cannot be absolutely ascertained. However, it must be remembered that in the context of "Tristram," Swinburne suggests only that Wagner's music "stimulate[s]" him,[103] and that in his poem on "The Death of Richard Wagner" he concentrates on the elemental effect of that music:

> Winds that make moan and triumph, skies that bend,
> Thunders, and the sounds of tides in gulf and firth,
> Spake through his spirit of speech, whose death should send
> Mourning on earth.

To Swinburne, Wagner's song was at one with the song of earth:

> The soul wherein her songs of death and birth,
> Darkness and light, were wont to sound and blend,
> Now silent, leaves the whole world less in worth.[104]

It may be positively affirmed that if he had become aware of the other-worldly and dualistic import of Wagner's thought he would have condemned it as soundly as did Nietzsche; and that his version of the Tristram legend is substantially different from Wagner's, as we shall see.

Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse," consisting of nine "movements," opens with a "Prelude" dedicated to the power of Love, the eternal force creating and animating the world and containing its opposites. As was suggested in Chapter II, Love is the same force as Hertha: it is the World-Soul which "wrought the whole world without stroke of hand, /Shaping the breadth of the sea, the length of the land," and which encompasses the "day and night of things alternative," the "ebb and flow of dying death and life" ("Prelude," [5]). In fact, the "Prelude" was composed immediately after "Hertha" was completed and contains the same ideas as "Hertha."[105] They are, however, explored in the work as a whole from a more individual and psychological perspective. Tristram and Iseult are a part of Love, that force which is also the "flesh upon the spirit of man /And spirit within the flesh whence breath began" ("Prelude," [5]), and symbolize its power; as individuals they come to understand and accept its power over them, the power of Fate.[106]

Canto I, "The Sailing of the Swallow," first presents Tristram and Iseult as carefree innocents, untouched as yet by the deeper pleasures and pains of life and of love:

Yet was not love between them, for their fate
Lay wrapt in its appointed hour at wait,
And had no flower to show yet, and no sting. (I, 17)

Iseult's innocence is conveyed by the images with which she is described. She is a fair white "lily" (I, 14, repeated 15), "more fair than foam or dawn was white" (I, 13). Her eyes are a blending of sea and sky, and her face radiates a "silent light as of a God content" (I, 15):

Her gaze was glad past love's own singing of,
And her face lovely past desire of love.
Past thought and speech her maiden motions were,
And a more golden sunrise was her hair.
The very veil of her bright flesh was made
As of light woven and moonbeam-coloured shade
More fine than moonbeams; white her eyelids shone
As snow sun-stricken that endures the sun [.] (I, 13-14)

Throughout the poem, images of flower, sea, and light are prevalent, and are used to suggest both the lovers' transience as individuals and their permanence as part of the enduring force of life. Here, the image of light, particularly the dawn, is perhaps most important: it suggests that Iseult as yet embodies one aspect of the force of life.

Iseult's natural innocence is also conveyed by her childlike actions and questions to Tristram about such things as the famous beauty of Guenevere:

"Ah," said Iseult, "is she more tall than I?
Look, I am tall"; and struck the mast hard by,
With utmost upward reach of her bright hand;
"And look, fair lord, now, when I rise and stand,
How high with feet unlifted I can touch
Standing straight up; could this queen do thus much?
Nay, over tall she must be then, like me;
Less fair than lesser women." (I, 21)

Tristram responds to her questions about the fair beauty of Guenevere by telling her that Guenevere's face is clouded by the knowledge of her fate and of that of Arthur (I, 22), for God shall "not suffer scorn /Nor in men's souls and lives his law lie dead" (I, 25; see above). But Iseult finds it difficult to comprehend that God should be so unforgiving:

> "Great pity it is and strange it seems to me
> God could not do them so much right as we,
> Who slay not men for witless evil done;
> And these the noblest under God's glad sun
> For sin they knew not he that knew shall slay,
> And smite blind men for stumbling in fair day.
> What good is it to God that such should die?
> Shall the sun's light grow sunnier in the sky
> Because their light of spirit is clean put out?" (I, 25)

She also finds the songs that Tristram sings to entertain her on their journey difficult to comprehend. These songs are of love and of the "day and night" dualities of "full life" (and are in keeping with the thought of the "Prelude"):

> Love, is it morning risen or night deceased
> That makes the mirth of this triumphant east?
>   Is it bliss given or bitterness put by
> That makes most glad men's hearts at love's high feast?
>   Grief smiles, joy weeps, that day should live and die.

And

> O which is elder, night or light, who knows?
> And life or love, which first of these twain grows?
>   For life is born of love to wail and cry,
> And love is born of life to heal his woes,
>   And light of night, that day should live and die. (I, 31)

This song presents an alternative vision to that of the control of a stern God, but it also includes darkness.[107] The second song, more personal in its perspective, presents love as the force unifying the individual man with life and with the beloved (and is in keeping with the implications of the "nature poems"):

> The breath between my lips of lips not mine
> Like spirit in sense that makes pure sense divine,
>   Is as life in them for the living sky
> That entering fills my heart with blood of thine
>   And thee with me, while day shall live and die.
>
> Thy soul is shed into me with thy breath,

And in my heart each heartbeat of thee saith
  How in thy life the lifesprings of me lie,
Even if one life to be gathered of one death
  In me and thee, though day may live and die. (I, 32)

Together, the songs contain the essential ideas and images of the work as a whole, but their deep implications are not understood by Iseult, whose "forseen vision" is only of "sweet things" (I, 14). As she says to Tristram, referring particularly to the first one, "your song is hard to read" (I, 32).

The truths of which Tristram sings are also unlived by him. Although he has been Iseult's tutor in "song" and will continue to be, he is himself yet an untried innocent: "Nor had love made it [Tristram's face] as his written scroll /For evil will and good to read in yet" (I, 15). However, he is described as having the potentiality of facing the truths of existence with strength:

And in his face a lordship of strong joy
And height of heart no chance could curb or cloy
Lightened, and all that warmed them at his eyes
Loved them as larks that kindle as they rise
Toward light they turn to music love the blue strong skies.
So like the morning through the morning moved
Tristram, a light to look on and be loved. (I, 16)

This imagery of the bird and the morning sun is also employed later in the canto to describe Iseult's still innocent reaction to his song:

                                        but he,
Sweet-hearted as a bird that takes the sun
With clear strong eyes and feels the glad god run
Bright through his blood and wide rejoicing wings,
And opens all himself to heaven and sings,
Made her mind light and full of noble mirth
With words and songs the gladdest grown on earth,
Till she was blithe and high of heart as he,
So swam the Swallow through the springing sea. (I, 33-34)

She has the same reaction, one of "noble joy," to his strength in battling the stormy sea, which is much like his power of song:

> She thought if God had given her grace to be
> Man, and make war on danger of earth and sea,
> Even such a man she would be; for his stroke
> Was mightiest as the mightier water broke,
> And in sheer measure like strong music drave
> Clean through the wet weight of the wallowing wave [.] (I, 34)

Both manifest in their spring of innocence the potential for facing the strife of existence with strength and joy.[108]

Throughout the opening section of the poem their potential love for each other is also underlined, as Iseult's reactions to Tristram's words clearly indicate.[109] When Iseult is first described, she is already a "lily" about to blossom into a "rose" (I, 14), and she momentarily actualizes this potential at those times when some "flash of blood, light as the laugh of flame" breaks through her white light of innocence (I, 15). Such moments occur when she reacts to Tristram's noble strength, and when she feels the force of nature, its power and its amorous peace. As she turns away from her troubled thoughts about the wrath of God to watch the sunrise, this full life flames in her. Here her delight in the forces of nature is subtly linked with her potential feeling for Tristram, as he has been described throughout in images of the morning sun:

> And sighing, she looked from wave to cloud about,
> And even with that the full-grown feet of day
> Sprang upright on the quivering water-way,
> And his face burned against her meeting face
> Most like a lover's thrilled with great love's grace
> Whose glance takes fire and gives; the quick sea shone
> And shivered like spread wings of angels blown
> By the sun's breath before him; and a low
> Sweet gale shook all the foam-flowers of thin snow
> As into rainfall of sea-roses shed
> Leaf by wild leaf on that green garden-bed
> Which tempests till and sea-winds turn and plough:
> For rosy and fiery round the running prow
> Fluttered the flakes and feathers of the spray,
> And bloomed like blossoms cast by God away
> To waste on the ardent water . . . . (I, 25-26)[110]

The "sacred Passion of the sun" is associated with the creative force which "[s]ince the first life in the first world began" has "[brought] forth roses" (I, 26-27), and (as above) with the inevitable destruction of the transient forms of nature. It is also associated with the growth of love in Iseult: like the sea, she feels the "dawn . . . cleave" both body and soul,

> and incensed with the influent hour
> Her whole soul's one great mystical red flower
> Burst, and the bud of her sweet spirit broke
> Rose-fashion, and the strong spring at a stroke
> Thrilled, and was cloven, and from the full sheath came
> The whole rose of the woman red as flame [.] (I, 27)[111]

This blossoming forth of flame in Iseult subsides as well, but only because it must wait for the final moment and the "irrevocable flower" (I, 27) -- the fatal drinking of the cup.

In Swinburne's version, the drinking of the love potion is the culmination of their own natural potentials and growing awareness of each other rather than only an arbitrary act of chance.[112] It is a symbol of their dedication to love and a seal of their fate. Iseult

> Undid the hasps of gold, and drank, and gave,
> And he drank after, a deep glad kingly draught:
> And all their life changed in them, for they quaffed
> Death; if it be death so to drink, and fare
> As men who change and are what these twain were.
> And shuddering with eyes full of fear and fire
> And heart-stung with a serpentine desire
> He turned and saw the terror in her eyes
> That yearned upon him shining in such wise
> As a star midway in the midnight fixed.
> Their Galahault was the cup, and she that mixed;
> Nor other hand there needed, nor sweet speech
> To lure their lips together; each on each
> Hung with strange eyes and hovered as a bird
> Wounded, and each mouth trembled for a word;
> Their heads neared, and their hands were drawn in one,
> And they saw dark, though still the unsunken sun
> Far through fine rain shot fire into the south;
> And their four lips became one burning mouth. (I, 37-38)

Swinburne's interpretation of the love potion may be contrasted with Wagner's. In Wagner's version the lovers, who have long since lost their innocence of mind, consciously choose to drink death. Ostensibly Isolde has prepared poison to revenge Tristan's murder of Morhart (in Wagner, her suitor rather than her uncle) but in her heart to offer him "atonement" for betraying their own unspoken love by bringing her to Marke. Tristan accepts the drink as a pledge and as a release from the world of divided motives and incomplete union.[113] They both despair when they discover that Brangaene has substituted the love potion and therefore plunged them back into this world.[114] In Swinburne's version, however, the lovers drink life which, as the "Prelude" suggests, includes death and darkness. Swinburne suggests that they "quaffed/Death" but he adds, "if it be death so to drink, and fare /As men who change and are what these twain were." As the imagery implies, they have entered on a course in which they will confront the "divine contraries" of existence -- day and night, life and death. The love potion represents the specific circumstances of their life which they cannot alter; yet by generalizing, Swinburne indicates that the potion also "represents the way things are, which a man must learn to understand and to accept."[115]

The obvious verbal echoes of the fate of Adam and Eve as presented in Book IX of Paradise Lost support this interpretation of the passage.[116] It is not that the lovers have sinned in Swinburne's eyes -- although they themselves may partially think so, as their discussion of the love of Launcelot and Guenevere suggests.[117] Instead, as the moral perspective of the poem as a whole affirms, when they drink the potion they leave the paradise of innocence and incomplete knowledge for the world of actuality and the knowledge of good and evil. As McSweeney explains it:

> Before drinking the love potion, the lovers, as the imagery describing them suggests, are innocent and seem to exist in a state of beautiful simplicity, of unselfconscious absorption in the natural world. After they have drunk they come gradually to lose this innocence, in the sense that they become committed to a course of life which forces them to examine closely the nature and meaning of their existence and which finally leads them through much suffering to death. Through the love potion they enter a world of experience in which they first become aware of the force of Fate.[118]

If it is a fall, then, it is a fortunate one, as the lovers move to a more complete view of the nature of existence.

The second canto begins with the presentation of Iseult to Mark and the substitution of Brangwain for Iseult in the marriage bed. King Mark is the opposite of Tristram in both appearance and attitude. Tristram is likened to the morning sun, but Mark stands somewhere "between shade and sun." His body is "lean" and "wan" and his face like "one /Long time athirst and hungering for the sun." When he takes Iseult's hand he is striken by "fear and shame" and only a "thin flame" of desire "flush[es] his cold face" (II, 41). And when his body is enlivened by the "sun" (or the woman he thinks is the sun-like Iseult) he is unable to cope with the warmth. His soul is troubled because he sees such light as essentially belonging to heaven alone. To him Iseult is a heavenly maiden: as he says, she "seems /More fair than heaven doth in some tired saint's dreams," and is "part of that same heaven":

> to me sinful such great grace is given
> That in mine hands I hold this part of heaven,
> Not to mine eyes lent merely. Doth God make
> Such things so godlike for man's mortal sake?
> Have I not sinned, that in this fleshly life
> Have made of her a mere man's very wife? (II, 43)

This is the first clear juxtaposition of the natural and the Christian perspectives in the poem. Mark sees sensuality as guilty even when it is within marriage because his attitude is essentially dualistic.[119] When we first see him, he stands "on the mid stairs, between the light and the dark" (II, 41). His stance is symbolic not only of his appearance (which is symbolic in itself) but also of his dualistic attitude.

Mark's attitude also contrasts to Tristram's in the next episode in the canto: the abduction of Iseult by Palamede and the consequent idyllic interlude in the forest which the lovers enjoy. Palamede claims Iseult as his reward for the song he plays for the king, and Mark considers that he must remain loyal to his promise to grant the minstrel any boon; otherwise, he would "live soul-shamed" in "God's and all men's sight" (II, 45). It is significant to note that by introducing Palamede in this episode Swinburne alters his main sources and turns to the prose tradition incorporated by Malory into his Morte d'Arthur. In Thomas and the Middle-English Sir Tristrem, the incident involves an unnamed Irish knight disguised as a minstrel, and Tristram wins Iseult back from him with the same kind of guile he had used himself.[120] Swinburne, however, incorporates this story with the prose tradition of Palamede as the rival suitor to Iseult, leaving out the fact that he originally challenges Tristram for Iseult's love when they are still in Ireland and that he later wins Iseult in the context of the plot against Brangwain's life, and retaining only his battle with Tristram in the forest.[121]

Swinburne makes these changes for several reasons, the most important being his use of the principles of parallelism and contrast, and his desire to present his lovers in the most sympathetic and heroic fashion possible.[122] His version more closely parallels the abduction of Guenevere and her rescue by Launcelot and therefore indirectly continues the link between the two loves. It also makes Tristram's first adventure parallel to his last one, presented in canto VIII, in which he rescues his namesake's lady from abductors and is fatally wounded. Furthermore, it introduces another contrast with Mark, this time between the Christian king and the pagan knight. Palamede, the famous pagan knight, is not a purely sensual, "lewd" man: he owes his allegiance not to God but to "love's high law, /That can make lewd men loyal" (II, 45). The difference between Tennyson's "free love" and Swinburne's natural love is established even here: for Swinburne, love is of both body and soul, sense and spirit; and his pagan abstains from violently taking Iseult because he hopes that he may, through "courtesy," win her "grace" and "comfort" (II, 46).[123] Mark, on the other hand, hungers for "what gift of rare or lesser worth" (II, 41) might be brought to him by Tristram and then, in typically dualistic fashion, is ashamed of his fleshly desires.

By his combination of the two versions, Swinburne also avoids associating his lovers with treachery or with guile. He avoids Iseult's treacherous part in the plot against Brangwain (which initiates the abduction in the prose tradition) and Tristram's clever deception of the minstrel (which concludes it in the Thomas tradition). By having Tristram battle with Palamede, he establishes Tristram's physical prowess as a knight instead. Here Tristram is more like an epic hero and, in typical epic similes, his strength is compared to the forces of nature:

> like the rushing of a ravenous flame
> Whose wings make tempest of the darkness, came
> Upon them headlong as in thunder borne
> Forth of the darkness of the labouring morn
> Tristram . . . . (II, 46)

And:

> They flashed and foined full royally, so long
> That but to see so fair a strife and strong
> A man might well have given out of his life
> One year's void space forlorn of love or strife.
> As when a bright north-easter, great of heart,
> Scattering the strengths of squadrons, hurls apart
> Ship from ship labouring violently, in such toil
> As earns but ruin -- with even so strong recoil
> Back were the steeds hurled from the spear-shock, fain
> And foiled of triumph . . . . (II, 47)[124]

Swinburne's central figures are, then, associated with nature, with the laws of "love and strife," rather than with the court and courtly intrigues.

Given this opportunity to break away entirely from the court, Tristram and Iseult continue to celebrate the laws of love in the forest. Their love is presented as entire, of both spirit and sense,[125] and as one with nature and the spirit and forces that move her:

> Iseult and Tristram took their wandering way,
> And rested, and refreshed their hearts with cheer
> In hunters' fashion of the woods; and here
> More sweet it seemed, while this might be, to dwell
> And take of all world's weariness farewell
> Than reign of all world's lordship queen and king.
> Nor here would time for three moons' changes bring
> Sorrow nor thought of sorrow; but sweet earth
> Fostered them like her babes of eldest birth,
> Reared warm in pathless woods and cherished well. (II, 48)

This is the first clear juxtaposition in the poem of the realm of society and that of nature; and Iseult and Tristram, "outlaw-like, in forest wise and free," choose to become "as queen and king /Crowned of a kingdom wide as day and night" (II, 48 and 49).

They are, however, out of harmony with nature in one respect. They attempt to ignore the fact that change and death are also a part of nature and of love:

> But like a babbling tale of barren breath
> Seemed all report and rumour held of death,
> And a false bruit the legend tear-impearled
> That such a thing as change was in the world.
> And each bright song upon his lips that came,
> Mocking the powers of change and death by name,
> Blasphemed their bitter godhead, and defied
> Time, though clothed round with ruin as kings with pride,
> To blot the glad life out of love[.] (II, 49)

They have not as yet recognized that as conscious individuals they, like all particulars of nature, are part of the world of change and death. Indeed, they are so anxious to preserve their "one pure hour all-golden" in the darkness of love's night (II, 52)[126] that they momentarily contemplate leaving life entirely. When they see that their night of love is passing, Iseult asks Tristram,

> "Hast thou no sword? I would not live till day;
> O love, this night and we must pass away,
> It must die soon, and let not us die late." (II, 51)

In their desire to inhabit a paradise apart from change and death, Tristram and Iseult are much like the speaker of "The Triumph of Time." In the earlier poem, the speaker suggests that had his woman loved him they would have "grown as gods," "One splendid spirit, your soul and mine."[127] Here Tristram and Iseult do experience the complete love he only envisions. They are

> Soul-satisfied, their eyes made great and bright
> With all the love all the livelong night
> With all its hours yet singing in their ears
> No mortal music made of thoughts and tears,
> But such a song, past conscience of man's thought,
> As hearing he grows god and knows it not. (II, 39)

However, as established earlier, the speaker's dream that Tristram and Iseult momentarily actualize is too idealistic. They, too, wish to inhabit an ever-fruitful paradise apart from the "change of years," "the coil of things," in which they would see "Grief collapse as a thing disproved, /Death consume as a thing unclean" and would be protected by the wings of the God of love.[128] They too must learn that "Love that sings and hath wings as a bird" is both "Balm of the wound and heft of the knife."[129]

In their desire to escape from life entirely, Tristram and Iseult may be compared with Wagner's lovers. As Sypher suggests,

> In Act II, Wagner's Tristan and Isolde celebrate their love under the protection of night. When Brangaene warns them that dawn is near, Tristan answers: "Laisse-moi mourir"; "Laissez la mort vaincre le jour." And when Brangaene speaks out again, Isolde echoes "Laisse-moi mourir!" ([Quatre poèmes d'opéras] II, ii, pp. 288-290).
>
> In Swinburne's version, it is Iseult who, on their night in the "Queen's Pleasance," first asks for death to conquer the day. . . . It is characteristic of Swinburne that he would have reversed the roles of the lovers. The woman has pierced earlier and deeper to the apprehension of their fate. Iseult understands already the impossibility of their fulfilling their love in this world . . . .[130]

There are, however, several significant differences between Swinburne's canto II and Wagner's Act II. Sypher does not mention the fact that Swinburne's lovers celebrate natural passion whereas Wagner's lovers do not even consummate their love — according to most critics -- and that here Tristram's answer to Iseult's plea is to make love to her once more. The whole passage is less serious in tone than Wagner's: Iseult's desire for death is not an all-consuming passion but more of a lover's complaint in the *alba* tradition.[131] In Swinburne's own rendition of the Provencal *alba* "In the Orchard," it may be added, the woman's desire to be slain by the sword is part of her general reluctance for the coming of day and has, as F.A.C. Wilson establishes, phallic implications.[132] The same may be suggested of Iseult's desire, particularly when considering Tristram's answer to her.[133] The incident is, as well, included by Swinburne so that he may explain Mark's discovery of them in the forest with a sword between them.[134] And, finally, it should be noted that the lovers do not remain in this state of still-innocent idealism. Tristram, Iseult's tutor throughout their lives, is the first to move on to an acceptance of change and death and the pains of existence.

In the next canto Tristram, alone and separated from Iseult for three years, muses over the very question of change and death. He begins his meditation with his parting words to Iseult:

> "'As the dawn loves the sunlight I love thee;'
> As men that shall be swallowed of the sea
> Love the sea's lovely beauty; as the night
> That wanes before it loves the young sweet light,
> And dies of loving; as the worn-out noon
> Loves twilight; and as twilight loves the moon
> That on its grave a silver seal shall set --
> We have loved and slain each other, and love yet." (III, 54.)

At first he takes comfort in the fact that the cycles of nature continue, just as he and Iseult have "died" in their lovemaking and have arisen again.[135] So, too, they have been separated and will be reunited again and, by extension, as part of the eternal cycles of nature will endure forever. However, he is also aware now that the particular, individual manifestations of nature do, in themselves, pass "irrevocably" away:

> "As the dawn loves the sunlight that must cease
> Ere dawn again may rise and pass in peace;
> Must die that she being dead may live again,
> To be by his new rising nearly slain.
> So rolls the great wheel of the great world round,
> And no change in it and no fault is found,
> And no true life of perdurable breath,
> And surely no irrevocable death." (III, 55)

But:

"Alas, but how shall foolish hope forget
How all these loving things that kill and die
Meet not but for a breath's space and pass by?
Night is kissed once of dawn and dies, and day
But touches twilight and is rapt away." (III, 55)

He finally accepts, although not without some despair,[136] the truth that the individual man is but part of one indifferent and impersonal cycle of nature and that he cannot hope to prolong that "one golden hour" or, as he calls it here, that "breath's space" of meeting in perfect love. He understands that the "whole tides's tune" will not be altered for "the instant foam's sake on one turning wave" (III, 59).[137] And he comprehends the power of Fate:

"how should fate,
That is not good nor evil, wise nor mad,
Nor just nor unjust, neither glad nor sad --
How should the one thing that hath being, the one
That moves not as the stars move or the sun
Or any shadow or shape that lives or dies
In likeness of dead earth or living skies,
But its own darkness and its proper light
Clothe it with other names than day or night,
And its own soul of strength and spirit of breath
Feed it with other powers than life or death --
How should it turn from its great way to give
Man that must die a clearer space to live?" (III, 59)[138]

With this acknowledgement, his own strength returns and he has the courage even to face the wasteland within and without: as he continues on through "the brown wolds bare and sad as banishment,"

fresh courage on him came,
Till dawn rose too within him as a flame;
The heart of the ancient hills and his were one[.] (III, 60-61)

Tristram is now one with nature in a fuller sense and, as the narrator indicates, is now prepared to fulfill his potential as

one that saw
Not without reverence and sweet sense of awe
But wholly without fear or fitful breath
The face of life watched by the face of death;

> And living took his fill of rest and strife,
> Of love and change, and fruit and seed of life,
> And when his time to live in light was done
> With unbent head would pass out of the sun[.] (III, 62)

This is Swinburne's description of his ideal man, and Tristram's state of mind is that which is achieved in the "nature poems," in "Hesperia," and in the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise.

Canto III ends with Tristram's first meeting with the second Iseult, Iseult of the White Hands, and canto IV opens with their marriage night. It focuses, again, not on external events but on Tristram's inner struggle to remain faithful to Iseult rather than to accept the new April of Iseult of the White Hands, who is described as a "lily" with the potential of at least becoming a "mild wild rose []" (IV, 72 and 73). Swinburne's Tristram is contrasted not only with Tennyson's figure, who would have accepted this new April, but also, as we have seen, with Arnold's, who did accept the domestic tranquility of the second Iseult. Swinburne's Tristram remains true to the laws of natural love, which for man is of both "sense" and "spirit" and which is stronger than social obligation. Even though he does desire her physically, he leaves her untouched except by his gentle sympathy. The bond of love is stronger than lust or marriage.

Canto IV also includes, as part of Tristram's keen recollection of the past in the presence of the second Iseult, the events that took place between the lover's celebration in the forest and Tristram's lonely musings about the nature of existence and man's place in the world: their discovery by Mark with the sword between them; the rumours at court and their betrayal by a trusted kinsman; and Tristram's battle with Mark's knights and escape from the chapel high on the cliffside into the sea.[139] The events which he recollects are quite different from those of Wagner's Tristan. When he is discovered with Isolde, Wagner's Tristan offers no defence against his enemies and prefers death. Swinburne's Tristram, however, desperately fights for his life and, in fact, celebrates the very principle of life when he dives into the sea. His swim has obvious symbolic implications and is presented in much the same imagery as the swim in "The Lake of Gaube," including the seamew comparison:

> And as the sea-gull hovers high, and turns
> With eyes wherein the keen heart glittering yearns
> Down toward the sweet green sea whereon the broad noon burns,
> And suddenly, soul-stricken with delight,
> Drops, and the glad wave gladdens, and the light
> Sees wing and wave confuse their fluttering white,
> So Tristram one brief breathing-space apart
> Hung, and gazed down; then with exulting heart
> Plunged: and the fleet foam round a joyous head
> Flashed, that shot under, and ere a shaft had sped
> Rose again radiant, a rejoicing star,
> And high along the water-ways afar
> Triumphed . . .

And:

> as from fight
> Crowned with hard conquest won by mastering might,
> Hardly, but happier for the imperious toil,
> Swam the knight in forth of the close waves' coil,
> Sea-satiate, bruised with buffets of the brine,
> Laughing, and flushed as one afire with wine[.] (IV, 71)

This joyful moment of striving with the sea is placed here as a contrast to the social world (of Mark and of the second Iseult) and as an indication of Tristram's strong affinity with the world of nature rather than that of society.

Canto V returns to Iseult at Tintagel, alone and in deep thought as was Tristram in canto III. Her emotions are as turbulent as the raging storm which surrounds her. Her inner conflict is not between natural love and the call of lust or married obligation, as was Tristram's in canto IV, but between natural love and religious love, between the love of Tristram and of Christ.[140] She views her love for Tristram from the Christian perspective, invoking throughout its conceptions of heaven and hell,[141] but she is ultimately willing to forsake heaven and risk hell for her natural and passionate love of Tristram. Indeed, she would be "more glad than God above, /In the utmost hell whose fires consume not love" (V, 80) and would endure years "filled up full with tears, /Bitter like blood and dark as dread of death, /To win one amorous hour of mingling breath" (V, 83) with Tristram. The God she envisions is the distant God of the Old Testament, who is unlikely to forgive; and even Christ, the symbol of incarnation and forgiveness, seems to have grown cold:

> Know'st thou no more, as in this life's sharp span,
> What pain thou hadst on earth, what pain hath man?
> Hast thou no care, that all we suffer yet?
> What help is ours of thee if thou forget?
> What profit have we though thy blood were given,
> If we that sin bleed and be not forgiven?
> Not love but hate, thou bitter God and strange,
> Whose heart as man's heart hath grown cold with change,
> Not love but hate thou showest us that have sinned." (V, 84)

Iseult expects no forgiveness for herself, and prays only that Tristram, whose sin is less than hers and whose soul is greater, may be, if not forgiven, at least judged fairly.[142] Indeed, she herself is incapable of the necessary repentance:

> Shall I repent, Lord God? shall I repent?
> Nay, though thou slay me! for herein I am blest,
> That as I loved him yet I love him best --
> More than mine own soul or thy love or thee,
> Though thy love save and my love save not me. (V, 78).

Her only desire is for reunion with Tristram here on earth or -- knowing that Tristram could not endure heaven without her -- after death, even if in hell.

Iseult's Christian frame of reference indicates that she is less emancipated than Tristram at this point. In his own meditation in canto III, Tristram had retained the possibility of a God but had virtually identified Him with the power of fate and the forces of nature (see III, 56 and 58). It is important to note that here the only answer which Iseult receives to her questions and prayers is the sound of the wind and the waves in the darkness (which is followed by the dawn):

> And the night spake, and thundered on the sea,
> Ravening aloud for ruin of lives: and all
> The bastions of the main cliff's northward wall
> Rang response out from all their deepening length,
> As the east wind girdled up his godlike strength
> And hurled in hard against that high-towered hold
> The fleeces of the flock that knows no fold,
> The rent white shreds of shattering storm[.] (V, 78)

The force of the storm is deliberately compared to the wrath of God in the refrain which recurs with alterations throughout the canto (see V, 83, 84 and 84); the implication is that the only God is that earthly force which is seen and felt in the "contraries" of nature and which attains "spirit" in man himself.[143] But Iseult as yet "Heard not nor heeded wind or storming sea" (V, 78).

Kerry McSweeney has noticed the similarity between Swinburne's canto V and Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," and the parallels are, indeed, illuminating.[144] Both women debate inwardly the calls of human and divine love, and both undergo violent fluctuations of mood. The comparison is perhaps enhanced by Iseult's conjecture that her lover could have repented and turned his gaze to God -- even though she herself could never "strain insensual eyes toward increate light" (V, 82).[145] Their present situations are, of course, the opposite of each other: Eloisa has committed herself to Christ, but recognizes that she still feels the "flames"[146] of earthly passion; Iseult has committed herself to the absent Tristram, but still recognizes that she may endure the flames of hell for it. But the love that they previously enjoyed is similar: both disdained the laws of marriage and chose that "happy state! when souls each other draw, /When love is liberty, and nature, law" and which is earthly "bliss."[147] In Creative Mythology, Joseph Campbell also draws together the two medieval stories of passionate love, considering them to be the greatest examples of the new celebration of individual conviction and earthly commitment against social standards and religious other-worldliness. Their love is a human standard: it is neither lust of the flesh nor other-worldly desire, both of which are associated with dualism:

> In [Eloisa's] own words -- and they may yet be crowned in Heaven as the noblest signature of her century -- not the natural, animal urgencies of lust, not the supernatural, angelic desire to glow forever in the beatific vision, but the womanly, purely human experience of love for a specific living being, and the courage to burn for that love were to be the kingdom and the glory of a properly human life.[148]

Eloisa, however, did not have as good a tutor as Iseult[149] (and was compelled by him into her present impossible situation): in dualistic fashion, Abelard first fell prey to the lusts of the flesh, then (when lust was impossible) repented and returned to the Church and other-worldly concerns.[150] Campbell continues:

> Abelard, however, had never even known of that kingdom. For all his song-building and philosophy, the urge in his seduction of the girl had indeed been lust, and the urge behind his command of her to the nunnery had been fear -- both of which emotions she had transcended through her love . . . .[151]

By implicitly drawing together the two stories, Swinburne also manifests his own comprehension of the spirit of individuality and the concern for the earthly which emerged (or reemerged) during the medieval period.[152]

Iseult does win the "one amorous hour of mingled breath" for which she longs: canto VI presents their last moments of happiness together, in Joyous Gard, made possible by the assistance and sanction of Launcelot and Guenevere.[153] Their "August" love is as passionate as their "April" meeting, presented in canto II (see VI, 94); but their apprehension of the forces of nature and love is more complete now. Sypher suggests that throughout the poem they long for death, but even here they merely accept the fact that night follows day and death is a part of life:

> They communed, even till even was worn away,
> Nor aught they said seemed strange or sad to say,
> But sweet as night's dim dawn to weariness.
> Nor loved they life or love for death's sake less,
> Nor feared they death for love's or life's sake more
> And on the sounding soft funereal shore
> They, watching till the day should wholly die,
> Saw the far sea sweep to the far grey sky,
> Saw the long sands sweep to the long grey sea. (VI, 103)

There are reminders of the inevitability of death throughout the canto, both in the landscape and in their conversation. Joyous Gard is a place apart, their "place of strength to rest" in their hour of fulfilled love, but it is situated "By the utmost margin of the loud lone sea" (VI, 91); and now both Tristram and Iseult "hear" the powerful forces of nature.[154] They also express their awareness of the inevitable approach of death, Tristram conveying to Iseult his understanding of the meaning of the potion they drank together:

> ". . . Fate and love with darkling hands commixt
> Poured, and no power to part them came betwixt,
> But either's will, howbeit they seem at strife,
> Was toward us one, as death itself and life
> Are one sole doom toward all men, nor may one
> Behold not darkness, who beholds the sun." (VI, 97)

Iseult also conveys the insights which she gained during her lonely vigil: she declares that she wishes they may die together and that she will forego heaven and risk hell to be with him in life.[155] But Tristram, again her tutor, presents her with an alternative to endless suffering: the possibility of becoming one with the forces of nature which Merlin has achieved with Nimue:

> "their breath
> Stirs the soft springs of deathless life and death,
> Death that bears life, and change that brings forth seed
> Of life to death and death to life indeed,
> As blood recircling through the unsounded veins
> Of earth and heaven with all their joys and pains.
> Ah, that when love shall laugh no more nor weep
> We too, we too might hear that song and sleep! (VI, 99)

Iseult responds with happiness to this alternate possibility, but indicates that she is not as yet prepared to meet the oblivion of death.[156] Similarly, the narrator affirms that Tristram and Iseult will not "lie down tired and sleep before the night" (VI, 92), but -- as was predicted of Tristram in canto III -- will stand "equal" with "actual earth's equalities"[157] and with their own fate:

> Death shall not take them drained of dear true life
> Already, sick or stagnant from the strife,
> Quenched: not with dry-drawn veins and lingering breath
> Shall these through crumbling hours crouch down to death.
> (VI, 93)[158]

And they do live life, both in their acceptance of death and pain as part of it and in their complete communion with nature: "And their great love was mixed with all things great, /As life being lovely, and yet being strong like fate" (VI, 94). The similarity between the passages describing their present communion with nature and those describing the ultimate fate of Merlin and Nimue lends support to the pagan vision of ultimate sleep Tristram offers as an alternative to Iseult's image of hell.

The tempered joy of Tristram and Iseult is in direct contrast to the violent hatred of Iseult of Brittany, presented in canto VIII, the third vigil. The Iseult presented here is entirely different from Arnold's "sweetest Christian soul alive." As Swinburne suggests,

> that sweet spirit of old which made her sweet
> Was parched with blasts of thought as flowers with heat
> And withered as with wind of evil will;
> Though slower than frosts or fires consume or kill
> That bleak black wind vexed all her spirit still. (VII, 104)

She is now described in images opposite to those which she once shared in potential with Iseult of Ireland. She is a blighted flower (VII, 104), a "barren ear /Plucked from the sheaf":

> "Me, me the fullness of their joy drains dry,
> Their fruitfulness makes barren: thou, not I,
> Lord, is it, whom their wrongdoing clothes with shame,
> That all who speak shoot tongues out at thy name
> As all who hear mock mine?" (VII, 109)

The blighting force of "autumn" which has worked within her to kill all love for Tristram is linked with jealousy, repressed desire (VII, 105) and, as above, concern with the world's opinion. But she herself links her hatred with the righteous wrath of God: she

> Thirsted for judgement given of God's own mouth
> Against them, till the strength of dark desire
> Was in her as a flame of hell's own fire.
> Nor seemed the wrath which held her spirit in stress
> Aught else or worse than passionate holiness,
> Nor the ardent hate which called on judgement's rod
> More hateful than the righteousness of God. (VII, 107)

Her God is one who sees all and is swift to punish and, questioning His delay at striking down Tristram and Iseult (VII, 108), she wishes to be His immediate instrument of revenge:

> "Make me thy sword
> At least, if even thou too be wronged, O Lord,
> At all of these that wrong me: make mine hand
> As lightning, or my tongue a fiery brand,
> To burn or smite them with thy wrath . . . ." (VII, 109)

Iseult of Brittany also pleads for "one hour" with Tristram, but one hour in which to "triumph" (VII, 111) in revenge. Swinburne's portrait of the second Iseult is another denunciation of the cruelty and self-righteousness which he associates with Christianity. Her "Christianity" makes impossible any sympathy for her unfulfilled "sweetness."

The contrast between the two Iseults which Swinburne presents in his "Tristram" is much like the contrasts between women in his early plays. Meleager is confronted with the powerful force of both Atalanta and Althaea in Atalanta in Calydon, King Charles with Denise and his mother, Queen Catherine, in The Queen Mother, and King Henry with Rosamond and Queen Eleanor in Rosamond. The last triangular situation is most like this one, as Henry is married to Queen Eleanor and loves Rosamond. The women are similar, as well: Rosamond struggles to free herself from the unnatural bonds of custom and religion, while Eleanor vows vengeance in the name of the Lord. Eleanor, too, identifies her purposes with those of God: "I do thank God," she declares, "Be[ing] married to his love, my purpose making /Such even wing and way with his." She, too, considers herself the instrument of God's revenge.[159]

Canto VIII presents the gradual culmination of the fate of Tristram. In this canto, "The Last Pilgrimage," Tristram frees the land by slaying the giant Urgan and receives his fatal wound while freeing another bride from her abductors. Swinburne's "The Last Pilgrimage" seems a deliberate reversal of Tennyson's "The Last Tournament," for the images which characterized Tennyson's Tristram are applied here to the giant Urgan. This unnatural creature is as "red as earth's first race" (VIII, 116) and laughs "for very wrath and thirst to kill, /A beast's broad laugh of blind and wolfish will" (VIII, 117). In Tennyson's version, the man who returns to nature becomes a beast, but in Swinburne's version, natural man is of both sense and spirit: in man sense has risen into spirit and is mixed with it.[160]

Accordingly, Tristram's battles to save the land and then the bride of his namesake, although equally violent, are given a spiritual and heroic significance.[161] He rides "High-hearted with desire of happy fight /And strong in soul":

> here in bright blown autumn, while his life
> Was summer's yet for strength toward love or strife,
> Blithe waxed his hope toward battle . . . . (VIII, 115)

Similarly, his overcoming of the inward wasteland of despair, caused by his awareness of sorrow and death in the world which parting with Iseult has intensified, is presented in physical terms. Between his last two battles, he twice reaffirms his oneness with the "whole nature of things," once while sailing and once while swimming in the sea. In the first reaffirmation, a kind of preparation for the central moment in the poem, he feels the force of the Great Mother herself. Sailing past "unsounded caves /Unsearchable, wherein the pulse of waves /Throbs through perpetual darkness to and fro," he achieves the "very bay whence very Love" "Most meetly might have risen":

> For splendid as the limbs of that supreme
> Incarnate beauty through men's visions gleam,
> Whereof all fairest things are even but shadow or dream,
> And lovely like as Love's own heavenliest face,
> Gleams there and glows the presence and the grace
> Even of the mother of all, in perfect pride of place.
> (VIII, 118-119)

The peaceful sea in the bay is a perfect symbol of the permanence of the forces of Nature, and yet it is also a reminder of the eternal transience of her temporary manifestations, including the individual man. The aspects of Hertha presented in the "nature poems" -- the strife and change of her "many-coloured" forms and the central and changeless peace of her forces -- are again invoked here:

> There may not be beheld of men that die
> Aught else like this that dies not, nor may stress
> Of ages that bow down men's works make less
> The exultant awe that clothes with power its loveliness.
> For who sets eye thereon soever knows
> How since these rocks and waves first rolled and rose
> The marvel of their many-coloured might
> Hath borne this record sensible to sight,
> The witness and the symbol of their own delight,
> The gospel graven of life's most heavenly law,
> Joy, brooding on its own still soul with awe,
> A sense of godlike rest in godlike strife,
> The sovereign conscience of the spirit of life. (VIII, 119)

The eternal transience of the manifestations of nature is particularly conveyed by the image of the movement of the waves upon the rocks, which are like bright and flickering flowers in the sea. As a wave washes across a rock,

> All its quenched flames and darkling hues divine
> Leap into lustrous life and laugh and shine
> And darken into swift and dim decline
> For one brief breath's space till the next wave run
> Right up, and ripple down again, undone,
> And leave it to be kissed and kindled of the sun. (VIII, 120-121)

The imagery in this passage returns to that of canto I (particularly 26) and of canto III (particularly 57-59), and anticipates the presentation of Tristram swimming in the sea like a bright flower (VIII, 127). It relates to the process of creation and destruction in nature and to Tristram's part in that process.

Tristram himself, his spirit "changefully forlorn" like "fitful waters," now hears in the forces of nature "only certitude of death and change" (VIII, 122 and 121). Yet he is able to endure the knowledge, neither overcome by sorrow nor quite won over to a triumphant yet still tragic sense of joy. He achieves this "joy in strife" in the central moment in the poem, his dive into the sea. Waking at dawn beside the sea, his mind is instantly "rapt abroad beyond man's meaner kind /And pierced with love of all things . . . ." He is "Moved to make one with heaven and heavenlike earth /And with the light live water." He "cast[s] off his raiment for a rapturous fight" (VIII, 126) and dives like a triumphant hero to lovingly strive with the sea, his mother.

> and his heart
> Sent forth a shout that bade his lips not part,
> But triumphed in him silent: no man's voice,
> No song, no sound of clarions that rejoice,
> Can set that glory forth which fills with fire
> The body and soul that have their whole desire
> Silent, and freer than birds or dreams are free
> Take all their will of all the encountering sea. (VIII, 127)

In his silent swim, he becomes one with the harmony of life: "each glad limb became /A note of rapture in the tune of life, /Live music mild and keen as sleep and strife" (VII, 128).

There are reminders of transience here, too, both in the moment itself and in the narrative comment on it. Tristram

> Struck strongly forth with amorous arms made wide
> To take the bright breast of the wave to his
> And on his lips the sharp sweet minute's kiss
> Given of the wave's lip for a breath's space curled . . . .
> (VIII, 127)

The narrative comment on this moment draws together all of the images of transience in the poem: principally flowers, light, foam, and waves. The narrator wonders if Tristram knows that his moment of joy is as "fleet" as the wave,

> The bright thin grey foam-blossom, glad and hoar,
> That flings its flower along the flowerless shore.

On sand or shingle, and still with sweet strange snows,
As where one great white storm-dishevelled rose
May rain her wild leaves on a windy land,
Strews for long leagues the sounding slope of strand,
And flower on flower falls flashing, and anew
A fresh light leaps up whence the last flash flew,
And casts its brief glad gleam of life away
To fade not flowerwise but as drops the day
Storm-smitten, when at once the dark devours
Heaven and the sea and earth with all their flowers;
No star in heaven, on earth no rose to see,
But the white blown brief blossoms of the sea,
That make her green gloom starrier than the sky,
Dance yet before the tempest's tune, and die. (VIII, 129)

He is certain, however, that Tristram knows not that this fleeting hour of joyful oneness with nature will be his last.

In contrast to Tristram's joyful celebration of the "whole nature of things" is the apparent victory of Iseult of Brittany's negative and Christian sense of life in the last canto. She appears to achieve her longed-for moment of triumphant revenge when she deceives Tristram as to the colour of the sail,

Saying, "Ay, the ship comes surely; but her sail is black."
And fain he would have sprung upright, and seen,
And spoken: but strong death struck sheer between,
And darkness closed as iron round his head:
And smitten through the heart lay Tristram dead. (IX, 147-148)

As in the older ending of the Celtic legend, Iseult of Ireland arrives too late to be reunited with her love in life. She dies with him, and now "their lips become one _silent_ mouth" (IX, 148).[162]

There are, however, indications throughout the canto that Iseult of Brittany's sense of life has not triumphed. In the invocation to Fate with which the last canto opens, the Christian God in whom she believes is directly denied. Indeed, the invocation is Swinburne's most complete and vehement denial of this God. God is, he suggests in the imagery of _Songs before Sunrise_,

That sovereign shadow cast of souls that dwell
In darkness and the prison-house of hell
Whose walls are built of deadly dread, and bound
The gates thereof with dreams as iron round,
And all the bars therein and stanchions wrought
Of shadow forged like steel and tempered thought
And words like swords and thunder-clouded creeds
And faiths more dire than sin's most direful deeds:
That shade accursed and worshipped, which hath made
The soul of man that brought it forth a shade
Black as the womb of darkness, void and vain,
A throne for fear, a pasturage for pain,
Impotent, abject, clothed upon with lies,
A foul blind fume of words and prayers that rise,
Aghast and harsh, abhorrent and abhorred,
Fierce as its God, blood-saturate as its Lord;
With loves and mercies on its lips that hiss
Comfort, and kill compassion with a kiss,
And strike the world black with their blasting breath;
That ghost whose core of life is very death
And all its light of heaven a shadow of hell[.] (IX, 136)

Fate is, instead, an unconscious and indifferent power which is moved by "no man's prayer," which cannot be "bought and sold /For prayer or price of penitence or gold," "[w]hose" judgement in no god's hand is given," and which inevitably leads light to night and man to death and the cessation of conscious awareness of the alternatives of day and night (IX, 134). Fate is, essentially, the same power as Love, which was celebrated in much the same terms in the "Prelude." Fate is that

power beyond all godhead which puts on
All forms of multitudinous unison,
A raiment of eternal change inwrought
With shapes and hues more subtly spun than thought,
Where all things old bear fruit of all things new
And one deep chord throbs all the music through,
The chord of change unchanging, shadow and light
Inseparable as reverberate day from night[.]

It is that "power that keeps all the tune of things in chime" and moves all things

to die and live
In pulse and lapse of tides alternative,

> Through silence and through sound of peace and strife,
> Till birth and death be one in sight of life[.] (IX, 133)[163]

Love and Fate have been virtually indentified throughout the poem. The only difference Swinburne points to here is that Love is a more pervasive power: it *includes* the spirit of man, whereas Fate is lord "of all things save the soul of man" (IX, 133). Once again Swinburne suggests that man is subject to the inevitable working of "things" yet has creative power of his own. The false and life-denying God that man has created will be denied by those who have accepted the power of Fate and realized their part in the power of Love.[164]

Tristram also rejects the Christian perspective of Iseult of Brittany, but not as directly as in the invocation to Fate. When Iseult reminds him that God's judgement and the flames of hell await him (IX, 141 and 142), he only indicates his indifference to such possible judgement in the face of the pleasures, and even the pains, which he has had on earth.[165] He does not pray for forgiveness, considering (unlike Tannhäuser) that the "present grace" of Iseult is greater than the possible rewards of heaven:

> More to my soul than summer's to the south
> The mute clear music of her amorous mouth,
> And to my heart's heart more than heaven's great rest
> The fullness of the fragrance of her breast. (IX, 144)

He dwells not on what may await after death but on the arrival of Iseult and on their past moments of pleasure, "dreams of joy in Joyous Gard /Or wildwood nights beside the Cornish Strand": "His soul desired the dewy sense of leaves, /The soft green smell of thickets drenched with dawn," "The pulse of wind, the passion of the sea, /The rapture of the woodland" (IX, 140). Such memories also invoke that of "Merlin's holier sleep . . . /Wrapped round with deep soft spells in dim

Broceliande" (IX, 140), and the vision of Merlin is again presented as a possible alternative to Iseult's picture of eternal punishment.[166]

Tristram himself, then, remains uncertain; but the narrator's comment on the death of Tristram and Iseult reinforces the idea that they have become part of the unconscious forces of nature:

> So came their hour on them that were in life
> Tristram and Iseult: so from love and strife
> The stroke of love's own hand felt last and best
> Gave them deliverance to perpetual rest. (IX, 148)

He points out as a symbol of this truth that their remains have eventually become one with the changeless depths of the sea. Mark, who has forgiven them once he knows the part which the potion played in their love,[167] accords them a royal tomb in a chapel, but it is washed away by the waves and the lovers are returned to the Great Mother, the sea:

> For the strong sea hath swallowed wall and tower,
> And where their limbs were laid in woful hour
> For many a fathom gleams and moves and moans
> The tide that sweeps above their coffined bones
> In the wrecked chancel by the shivered shrine:
> Nor where they sleep shall moon or sunlight shine
> Nor man look down for ever: none shall say
> Here once, or here, Tristram and Iseult lay:
> But peace they have that none may gain who live,
> And rest about them that no love can give,
> And over them, while death and life shall be,
> The light and sound and darkness of the sea. (IX, 150-151)

The narrator is, then, certain that the lovers are not condemned to hell and that the alternative of Merlin first suggested by Tristram to Iseult in canto VI is truth. He also, by his own part in presenting their love, has reaffirmed the second possible comfort that Tristram offers to Iseult -- that they may achieve eternal life by living on in man's memory.[168] In the "Prelude," Swinburne speaks of his role as narrator, suggesting first of all that "love" has led them even "further" than to the final "lifeless life of night," into the eternal region of man's memory:

> Hath the best
> Light of love's all, of all that burn and move,
> A better heaven than heaven is? Hath not love
> Made for all these their sweet particular air
> To shine in, their own beams and names to bear,
> Their ways to wander and their wards to keep,
> Till story and song and glory and all things sleep?
> Hath he not plucked from death of lovers dead
> Their musical soft memories, and kept red
> The rose of their remembrance in men's eyes,
> The sunsets of their stories in his skies,
> The blush of their dead blood in lips that speak
> Of their dead lives, and in the listener's cheek
> That trembles with the kindling pity lit
> In gracious hearts[?] ("Prelude," 7)

It is the power of love working through the poet himself (awakened by his own sympathetic reaction to the potential of the story preserved in previous art) and then through his own song that makes their individual lives bloom again in the memory of man (see "Prelude," 12). The central images of transience (light and roses) are now associated with the achievement of immortality. By celebrating Iseult, Swinburne suggests, he has affirmed her place in the constellation of great women, from Helen to Guenevere, which marks the eternal course of the "sun-god which is love" ("Prelude," 9).[169] The only heaven Swinburne envisions is that of this sun-god, here identified with Love, in Songs before Sunrise with Freedom, and in many other poems with Apollo. As we will see when we examine the "Apollo poems," this heaven is not a separate realm from that of earth.

"Tristram of Lyonesse" is, then, central to the philosophy of Swinburne: it reaffirms the ideas of "Hertha" and presents the same process of the individual's acceptance of her truths that is put forward in "Hesperia." Lang suggests that it also may be considered to be a personal poem: he finds it "simply astonishing" that the critics have not found that "the personal element . . . of 'Tristram of Lyonesse' is not rather intrusive than inexistent."[170] His remark may seem rather strange, considering that the Tristram legend is of a fulfilled and enduring love and the Swinburne legend is of a brief and disappointed love which altered the course of his life. Of course, Swinburne and his central character are similar in their energetic love of nature, particularly of the sea, and in their joyful acceptance of the strife of existence, often symbolized by their swim in the sea. But it may be suggested that love functions in their lives in a similar fashion: it introduces them to a less idealistic view of existence, one that includes this awareness of strife, of change and the indifference of nature to man. What Tristram learned from his love, filled as it was with pain and separation, is what Swinburne learned from his unfulfilled longing.

The part love plays in Swinburne's own development of a realistic philosophy of life will be established in the next chapter, which examines his semi-autobiographical novels, A Year's Letters and Lesbia Brandon, and the poems which have been connected with them by the critics and, most particularly, "Thalassius," a poem which Swinburne himself suggested was "quasi-autobiographical."[171]

Chapter VI: SWINBURNE AND HIS "DREAD LADY"

Many accounts have been written of Swinburne's disastrous love for the "dread lady" of "Thalassius," a mysterious woman whose identity he seems to have taken pains to conceal. Until Mayfield's careful examination of the evidence in 1953, Gosse's story of Swinburne's love for and scornful rejection by "Boo," Jane Faulkner, had been accepted as fact.[1] Mayfield, however, proved conclusively that "Boo" was barely ten years old in 1862 when Swinburne supposedly proposed marriage to her.[2] Mayfield's revelation led to a search for Swinburne's "lost love," and Lang was the first to come forward with the suggestion that it was Mary Gordon, Swinburne's cousin.[3]

Mary, who was several years younger than Swinburne, spent much of her childhood with him, both at their parents' summer homes on the Isle of Wight and, in the autumns, at their grandfather's home in Northumberland. Mary herself gives an account in The Boyhood of Algernon Charles Swinburne of their family relationships[4] and of the time they spent riding, reciting poems, acting out plays, and making up songs and poems together. To Mary, some of their "happiest days" were spent at Sir John's house at Caphaeton:

> A large cousinhood gathered there on those bright autumn days, where everything seemed to combine for the delight of youth -- a lake to row or sail on, lovely gardens and woods to roam or play in, and, above all, abundance of ponies to ride. In these delights we revelled, and many a masterpiece of the Victorian poets was recited -- as only Algernon could recite -- during a splendid canter or a leisurely saunter on horseback through these beautiful Northumberland roads or fields.[5]

Her close and happy relationship with her daring and amusingly quick-witted cousin continued well into their youth. As Mary says, "for years -- all my unmarried life -- we rode together constantly and without mischance. We would gallop along wildly, much absorbed in our conversation . . . ."[6]

According to Lang, the crucial period in their relationship occurred during Swinburne's stay on the Isle of Wight from the summer of 1863 to February of 1864. Swinburne stayed with the Gordons when his own family went to Europe after the death of his beloved sister Edith in September. Meaning to remain with them only a few weeks, he stayed on until February because, as he said, "after being hard hit one is more afraid of any change than any monotony." The time he spent with Mary was a quiet interval for him, but it certainly was not monotonous. He worked on his study of Blake, and, inspired by Mary playing Handel on the organ, on Atalanta, declaiming the opening chorus to her as they rode by the sea. He also worked on Greek with Mary, helped her revise her novel Trusty in Fight, and wrote a morality play, "The Pilgrimage of Pleasure," for another of her stories, The Children of the Chapel. And, of course, he continued with his favorite activities, riding on the downs and swimming in the sea.[7] During this time or soon after, suggests Lang, Mary Gordon must have announced to Swinburne her decision to marry Colonel Disney Leith, a distinguished soldier twenty-one years her senior who had been badly wounded in the Sikh war of 1848. There is no record of Swinburne's reaction to this announcement, and Mary, who insisted that "there was never, in all our years of friendship, an ounce of sentiment between us" and that they were only on a "brother-and-sister footing," simply records that:

> My marriage in 1865, and subsequent residence . . . in Scotland,

> naturally caused something of a gap in our constant correspondence and intercourse, though he was always the same when we did meet. I have been unable to trace the letter he wrote when I announced to him my engagement, and said that as he had always been to me like an elder brother, I should like to feel that I had his approval. I know that he did write most kindly, saying that "If it was A[lice] or any of my sisters, I could not feel more sincerely interested," or words to that effect.[8]

Swinburne's last letters to Mary during this period -- or what remains of them, his enthusiastic accounts of his rides by the sea near Tintagel with Inchbold, referred to in Chapter IV -- were written in the autumn of 1864;[9] and they did not resume their correspondence until 1892, the year of her husband's death. The cipher letters which they exchanged from 1892 onward indicate that Mary -- who, meantime, had continued to be a novelist and poet of sorts, a hardy rider and an adventurous spirit (later visiting Iceland several times and even swimming in the cold Arctic waters when she was seventy[10]) -- also shared Swinburne's keen interest in flagellation.[11]

Lang suggests that Swinburne's reaction to Mary's announcement that she was to marry another man was recorded by Swinburne -- in his novels, in "The Triumph of Time" and other related poems like "A Leave-Taking," and in his confessedly semi-autobiographical play, The Sisters (written in 1892 and dedicated to Mary's mother). Lang's contention that Mary was the one love of Swinburne's life and that her rejection of him was his bitterest disappointment[12] has been corroborated by Jean Overton Fuller, who examines Swinburne's novels in greater detail and adds to the list of poems related to this experience. Lang's work has also been expanded by F.A.C. Wilson, who, in a series of articles, has examined portraits of Mary in other works like Atalanta and has investigated Mary's own novels, which frequently present a triangular situation between a somewhat masculine heroine much like herself, a conventional older man (either a father or a husband) much like Colonel Leith, and a wild and colourful young poet or hero (either a brother or a lover) much like Swinburne.[13]

Reginald Harewood in A Year's Letters, and Herbert Seyton in Lesbia Brandon (like Reginald Clavering in The Sisters) are admitted self-portraits by Swinburne,[14] and they confirm much of what we know about the young Swinburne from Mary's brief biography and Swinburne's own letters. The novels, particularly Lesbia Brandon, present Swinburne's early and intense love of nature, especially of the uncontrollable forces of the sea. The young Herbert of Lesbia Brandon would often

> set his face seaward and feed his eyes for hours on the fruitless floating fields of wan green water . . . till the soul of the sea entered him and filled him with fleshly pleasure and pride of life; he felt the fierce gladness and glory of living stroke and sting him all over as with soft hands and sharp lips: and under their impulse he went as before a steady gale over sands and rocks, blown and driven by the wind of his own delight, crying out to the sea between the whiles as to a mother that talked with him, throwing at it all the scraps of song that came upon his lips by chance, laughing and leaping, envious only of the sea-birds who might stay longer between two waves. The winter dangers of the coast were as yet mere rumours to him: but the knowledge [of] how many lives went yearly to feed with blood the lovely lips of the sea-furies who had such songs and smiles for summer, and for winter the teeth and throats of ravening wolves or snakes untameable . . . gave point to his pleasure and a sheathed edge of cruel sympathy to his love. All cruelties and treacheries, all subtle appetites and violent secrets of the sea, were part of her divine nature, adorable and acceptable to her lovers. Why should the gods spare men? or she, a sure and visible goddess, be merciful to meaner things? . . . These things he felt without thinking of them, like a child; conscious all over of the beauty and the law of things about him, the manner and condition of their life.[15]

In the figure of Herbert, Swinburne records not only his own joyful awareness of nature but also his not unrelated early fascination with the women of legend and history who seemed to embody the same power, his interest in flagellation, and his enthusiastic dedication to political freedom. Herbert expresses his fascination with such women as Helen, Clytemnestra, and Electra to both his tutor, Denham, and his sister, Margaret, who in Denham's eyes has many of the same fierce qualities. As the young boy says to them, "I think it is right to put a lot of women in the sea: it's like a woman itself: the right place for sirens to come out of and sing and kill people" (L.B, 24).[16] Swinburne's interest in flagellation is present in the many scenes (some of which have been cut out of the manuscript as it now exists) describing in detail the whippings which Herbert receives at the hands of the sadistic Denham. And his love of liberty and concern for the Italian cause is represented in fictional form in Herbert's youthful admiration for Marini, probably a portrait of Mazzini,[17] and his desire to enlist to fight for the cause.[18] Swinburne's interest in both flagellation and freedom may seem rather incongruous, but both involve his Herbert in a kind of overcoming of tyranny rather than a submission to it. Swinburne's exploration of the masochistic impulse is in keeping with Theodore Reik's analysis of masochism in modern man. According to Reik, one aspect of masochism in its active and developed form is the sense of the "mastery of a hard destiny," of the "world's events" and the time at which they occur, and even an exposure of the bankruptcy of educational and moral institutions by the enjoyment of the pain inflicted by them. Although the masochist appears to submit, he actually demonstrates his own control and "invincible rebellion." The great symbol of such a masochist is Prometheus.[19] As Swinburne says of his Herbert, once his education by the whips of the waves was to be replaced by that of the school rod, "A certain defiant fear and daring curiosity rose up and went out to meet the new life and its new law"

(L.B, 13). And when he is regularly subjected to these threatened whippings,

> in time Herbert had learnt to be quiet and perverse; it had grown into a point of honour with him to take what fate sent him at his tutor's hands with a rebellious reticence, and bear anything in reason rather than expose himself to an intercession which he could not but imagine contemptuous; and thus every flogging became a duel without seconds between the man and the boy. (L.B, 17)[20]

Herbert himself takes no pleasure in the pain inflicted on him, but only in his own defiant courage. Only Denham, who suffers from an "inverted and perverted" (L.B, 34) love for Margaret, obtains pleasure from the whippings he administers to Herbert, who looks so much like his sister. The passage quoted above is followed by one in which Herbert swims in the sea: he

> grappled with [the waves] as lover with lover, [flinging] himself upon them with limbs that laboured and yielded deliciously, till the scourging of the surf made him red from the shoulders to the knees, and sent him on the shore whipped by the sea into a single blush of the whole skin, breathless and untried. (L.B, 18)[21]

Now he feels "rather desire than courage," for "the magnetism of the sea drew all fear out of him" (L.B, 19). One encounter is the courageous defiance of masculine authority, later applied to political matters, and the other is the delighted acceptance of the feminine laws of life.

The relationship between the Swinburne-figure and the female-figures in both novels is also taken to be autobiography in fictional disguise. Reginald Harewood's attachment to Clara Radworth in A Year's Letters is often considered to be a reflection of Swinburne's interest in Mary Gordon. Clara is a dark, handsome, and clever woman who is adroit at painting and riding.[22] Redgie, who frequently gallops over the sands by the sea with her and considers her most "magnificent" when her long hair is free and blown by the wind and her face "hot and bright" with the excitement (L.B, 59),[23] simply idolizes his older cousin.[24] When he knows that her relationship with her older husband, a dull and distant scholar and scientist, is an unhappy one, Redgie both wishes her to have the courage to leave her husband and admires her noble patience with him. When she is dutifully tending to Ernest, Clara is a much more subdued and sorrowful figure than she is when she gallops across the moors. As Reginald writes to his friend, Edward Audley,

> She has sweet heavy eyes like an angel's in some great strange pain . . . . There is a sort of look about her lips and under the eyelids as if some sorrow had pressed there with his finger out of love for her beauty and left the mark. . . . She has a throat like pearl-colour, with flower-colour over that; and a smell of blossom and honey in her hair. No one on earth is so infinitely good as she is. . . . She is greater in her mind and spirit than men with great names. . . . Only she never lets her greatness of heart out in words. I don't think now that her eyes are hazel. She has in her the royal scornful secret of a great silence. Her hair and eyelashes change colour in the sun. I shall never come to know all she thinks of. I believe she is doing good somewhere with her thoughts. She is a great angel, and has charge of souls. . . . She has charge of me for one. (A.Y.L., 137 and 138)

The sight of her noble and patient dedication to her husband, "a mere ingenious laborious pedant and prig" (A.Y.L., 136), he tells his friend, made him immediately break down and beg her to leave her husband.

Redgie had earlier written a letter to Clara, saying to her, "You have shewn me by clear proof how infinitely you are the noblest of all women" (A.Y.L., 76), and urging her to actualize this courage by "break[ing] off this hideous compromise" she lives with, speaking to her brother, and leaving her husband's house immediately (A.Y.L., 75-76). It is followed by an even more urgent letter (written soon after the one to his friend Edward) imploring her to go away to France and to Italy with him immediately. This second letter seems to indicate that their relationship has progressed, either in word or deed:

> I don't think you cared about me a year ago -- not the least, my love that is now. I had to play Palomydes to your Iseult a good bit; but are you ever going to be afraid of the old king in Cornwall after this? as if we were not any one's match, and anything we please. . . . We shall have such a love in our life that all the ends of it will be sweet. . . . All little loves are such poor food to keep alive on: our great desire and delight, infinite faith and truth and pleasure, will last our lives out without running short. . . . We will have a good fight with the world if it comes our way. Let us have the courage of our love, knowing it for the best thing there is. . . . I shall make you wear your hair the way we like. Your sort of walk and motion and way of sitting has just made me think of the doves at Venice settling in the square, as we shall see them before summer. There is a head like you in San Zanipolo; a portrait head in the right corner of a picture of the Virgin Crowned: we shall see that. Only it has thick curled hair, like my sister's. (A.Y.L., 145 to 148)

Lady Midhurst, however, does all that she can to keep them apart and avoid a family scandal, even threatening to show to Redgie some compromising letters that Clara once wrote to a French admirer. She suggests that Clara's "sad satisfaction" is rather "ill put on" (A.Y.L., 89), and she ironically compliments Redgie for "play[ing] Launcelot in a suit of Arthur's armour -- rather in his new clothes after the wellknown make of modern tailordom . . ." (A.Y.L., 86). Aware of Redgie's first letter to Clara, sent to her by Clara herself, Lady Midhurst commends her grandson for at least being courageous enough in the letter to "find institutions criminal and revolt desireable" (A.Y.L., 86) and to urge Clara to openly break with her husband. However, she presents a quite different portrait of Clara to Redgie. As Clara's decision to reveal Redgie's letter itself indicates, she is a much more cold and clever woman than Redgie takes her to be and, while enjoying the devotion he shows to her, she will never compromise her honour. As Lady Midhurst warns him,

> she is not the woman, by nature or place, to risk becoming tarée in the slightest degree. She is thoroughly equable and cautious, beyond a certain point. The landmark is a good bit this side of serious love-making; hardly outside the verge of common sentiment. I assure you there is nothing to be made of her in any other way. She will keep you on and off eternally to no further purpose. (A.Y.L., 89 to 90)

Lady Midhurst had sent Reginald the same warning earlier in the year, when she had first heard of his attraction to Clara:

> our dear C.R. is one of the safest women alive. Not for other people, mind; not safe for you; not safe by any means for her husband; but as safe for herself as I am. Or as the Queen is . . . . She is a splendid manager in her way; a bad, petty, rather unwise way, I must and do think; but she is admirable in it. . . . She amuses herself in all sorts of the most ingenious ways; makes that wretch Ernest's life an Egyptian plague to him by constant friction of his inside skin and endless needle-probings of his sore mental places: enjoys all kind of fun, sparingly and heartily at once . . . and never for an instant slips aside from the strait gate and narrow way, while she has all the flowers and smooth pavings of the broad one -- at least all the enjoyment of them; or perhaps something better. (A.Y.L., 55 to 56)[25]

Swinburne's portrait of Clara is a complex one, but it may be presumed that the actual Clara is somewhere between Reginald's idealized view of her and Lady Midhurst's somewhat envious denunciation of her and attribution to her of some of her own qualities.

The portrait of Lesbia Brandon in the novel which has been given the same name is more frequently taken to be a picture of Mary Gordon. Lesbia is a darker and more lithe and masculine version of Clara. She has thick brown-black hair and is reputed to be a fearless rider.[26] Herbert is equally interested in the fact that she also writes verses, and can even manage elegiacs and Sapphics. In her poetry, she always takes the male role and "would be a real modern Sappho." As her father says of her, "I believe the truth is she wanted all her life to be a boy . . ., and must needs have a boy's training and do boy's lessons; minus the rod afterwards, you know.

Curious woman her governess was, and encouraged it; they were wonderfully fond of each other" (L.B., 53 to 55).[27] It is assumed by both families that Herbert's slightly older cousin will eventually be his wife. When they first meet, the rather feminine-looking Herbert has been dressed as a girl by Margaret Wariston for the evening's masquerade, and has been persuaded to keep up the act for the unsuspecting Lesbia. As "Helen," he is immediately accepted by Lesbia; and he is equally drawn to his cousin (L.B., 87 to 91).

It has been suggested that Herbert's sister, Margaret, who plays Lucrezia Borgia in the evening's production, is also a reflection of other qualities of Mary Gordon[28] -- the qualities, perhaps, of Clara that Lesbia does not and cannot have. Margaret, who is a good deal older than Herbert, is also rather unhappily married:

> his sister, living month by month a lonelier life, grew troubled as a water grows without perceptible wind. She could find nowhere much comfort or interest in her life; the great world wearied and vexed her, and her husband, a countryman born . . ., was willing enough to live in quite a dull life full of petty circumstances. . . . It was already enough for him to ride and read and legislate. But for her, in town or country, the life she lived was by no means enough. And unluckily she had no love for London. . . . Her husband did not embitter and did not enliven her life. She would have done him no wrong . . . . He had for her a little love, and she had much liking for him. He could fill up his life with little satisfactions, but she could find no single and sufficient expression of her wants and powers. In those years, a maiden at heart, she had a vague and violent thirst after action and passion. She did not rebel against what was, but she desired what might be. Of one thing only she never thought; of love. This emotion had never yet even grazed her in passing. . . . For her children even had no hold on her; a certain tenderness toward the youngest was her main maternal quality. On the whole she preferred Herbert . . . to whom she had played the part of mother and sister . . . . (L.B., 84 to 85)[29]

Herbert's intense attachment to Margaret is more than simple regard for a maternal figure. When she comes to his bedside, lets down her waves of long golden hair so like his own in colour,[30] and sings to him a ballad of the sea, they both seem overcome with an emotion which obviously borders on the sexual:

> a tempest and torrent of sudden tresses, heavy and tawny and riotous and radiant, [fell] over shoulders and arms and bosom; and under cover of the massive and luminous locks she drew up his face against her own and kissed him time after time with all her strength. . . . His whole spirit was moved with the passionate motion of his senses; he clung to her for a minute, and rose up throbbing from head to foot with violent love. . . . [H]e caressed her with signs and speechless kisses, flattering her with hands and eyes significant of love . . . . He fell asleep with her kisses burnt into his mind, and the ineffaceable brand of love upon his thoughts . . . . (L.B., 81)

The usually subdued "fire and rapture of life" (L.B., 1) in her seems to flame up whenever she sings ballads and songs of the sea, and they always leave Herbert "haunt[ed] and excit[ed] . . . for days" (L.B., 39).[31]

In both novels, the figure who represents the young Swinburne is rejected by the woman he loves, for various reasons. As Lady Midhurst had predicted when she first heard of the relationship, Clara finally writes to Redgie that she is resigned to her duties as a wife and will not sacrifice her and her husband's honour by leaving him. Her letter is in answer to Redgie's first one, and is perhaps more sorrowfully sincere than Lady Midhurst conceives it to be when she is also given it to read.[32]

> Because I am simple and frank, because I like (for a change) things and people with some movement in them, you take me for a sort of tied-up tigress, a woman of the Sand breed, a prophetess with some dreadful mission of revolt about her . . . . I am neither oppressed nor passionate. I don't want delivering in the least. . . . Be my friend in a quiet way, and always. . . . Can you change me my life from the opening of it? It began before yours was thought of; you know I am older; have been told how much, no doubt . . . . (A.Y.L., 78-79)

Even though Clara knows that she "might have had a grander sort of man for [her] companion" (A.Y.L., 79) than her husband, she will not for selfish reasons ruin his "just self-esteem and quiet content" (*A.Y.L.*, 80). She quotes several passages from Chalfont's Essays concerning the high cost to others of one's selfish acts and ambitions, and a passage from a book of Indian philosophy concerning the virtue of quiet resignation: "For before the beginning a little sorrow was ordained for thee, and also a very little pleasure; but there is nothing of thine that endureth forever" (*A.Y.L.*, 81 to 82).[33] When Redgie continues to urge her to action, she gives him a final and firm refusal in a letter which is written at Lady Midhurst's instigation and according to her instructions. As Redgie's grandmother says to Clara,

> Write a quiet word to Reginald, in a way to put an end to all this folly for good. . . . Leave no room for appeal. Put it in this way, suppose, as you could do far better than I can for you. That an intimacy cannot last which cannot exist without exciting unpleasant unfriendly remark. . . . That in a word, for your sake and his and other people's, you must pass for the present from intimates to strangers, and may hope if both please to lapse again in course of time from strangers into friends. I think this will do for the ground plan: add any intimation or decoration you like, I for one will never find or indicate a fault. (*A.Y.L.*, 153)[34]

Clara's final letter is not part of *A Year's Letters*, but Lady Midhurst's indirect account of it and of Reginald's reaction to it is. Lady Midhurst does manage again to find "fault" with Clara's "resolute sacrificial style," but she does admit that "There was a small grain of not dubious pathos in her letter: she was fond enough of him to regret what she did not quite care to fight for" (*A.Y.L.*, 163).[35] Lady Midhurst also reports to Amicia that Redgie has accepted Clara's decision with the chivalry to which Clara had appealed, and that Clara will probably be done with such "Platonic" flirtation and content herself with "foreign missions" and "religious feelings" (*A.Y.L.*, 161).

Herbert Seyton of Lesbia Brandon is rejected by Lesbia not because of a marriage but because she is "not marriageable," and she tells him so directly as they walk together on the downs. Lesbia understands neither his love for her nor the cruelty she inflicts by coldly rejecting it. As she says to him, "And now you must take me as I am. If I could love or marry, I am sure I could love and marry you, absurd as people would call it. But I can't. I don't know why, at least I don't wholly know. I am made as I am . . . ." She adds that, instead, she "should like to feel thoroughly that we are not less than brother and sister," and that she could be his "elder brother" (L.B., 99 to 101).[36]

Lesbia cautions him not to continue to hope, but Herbert still seems to be haunted by her image after she has rejected him. When he meets the worldly Leonora Vane Harley at the instigation of Mr. Linley, who is attempting "to lift the young fool out of the slough of sentiment and despondency" (L.B., 104), a "face unlike hers" (L.B., 117) comes between them and prevents his forming even a sexual relationship with Leonora.[37] Leonora Harley's professionally bland and unintelligent face repels Herbert, even though he does recognize a certain sexual magnetism in her slow bodily sensuality. This episode, added to the novel at a later date, is usually considered to be a reflection of Swinburne's unsuccessful but much publicized relationship with Adah Isaacs Menken, the circus rider who made such a sensation in London and even won the notice of Dickens and Tennyson. Swinburne called her his "Dolores," the snake-like woman of Poems and Ballads; his poems had been written several years before he met her in 1867, but by a strange coincidence, her real name was Dolores.[38] Although Swinburne liked to boast of his amorous conquest, the relationship itself seems to have been unsuccessful: as the story goes, Menken was obliged to return the ten pounds she was given by Rossetti to educate his "little Northumberland friend," as she was not able to acquaint Swinburne with the pleasures of normal sexuality.[39]

The hope of winning Lesbia's love persists in Herbert until she rejects him again and finally when she summons the man she thinks of as a brother to her death-bed. Lesbia has slowly poisoned herself with opium and eau-de-Cologne, presumably because of her impossible attraction to Margaret, the Proserpine figure of her dreams who seems to call her down into the world of sleep. Like Sappho, Lesbia has prepared herself for her final plunge into the sea. Certainly with the image of Margaret in her mind, she asks the brother who so resembles Margaret for one final kiss; but she is immediately repulsed, overcome by a "blind absolute horror" (L.B., 164), when he responds with great ardency. Rejected, Herbert watches her slowly die and knows the "reality of fate":

> The night, as hope and trust fell away from under him, he first learnt the reality of fate: inevitable, not to be cajoled by resignation, not to be averted by intercession: unlike a God, incapable of wrath as of pity, not given to preference of evil or good, not liable to repentance or to change. (L.B., 166)[40]

It has been suggested by Jean Overton Fuller that Herbert is also rejected by his sister, Margaret. In a chapter difficult to place in its proper sequence in the novel, as are most of the final chapters of this unfinished work, Margaret is parting with an unnamed lover with whom, we are told, she has had "one year" of happiness. As in the case of Clara and Redgie, honour forces the lovers to part.[41] To the lover, suicide seems the only possible answer, but Margaret momentarily tries to believe that they could merely separate and that he could continue his relationship with his other woman (who is also left unnamed in the chapter):

> We will settle to see each other sometimes: no harm shall come of it, and you will be good to her: ah, but she will not let you; nor deserve it. . . . We shall live and grow old -- I shall be soonest old, by so much -- and keep alive each by knowing that the other lives . . . . And we shall not have happiness, but honour and love and life we shall have. No; none of them; no, not one. You were right. I cannot bear it. But I could not bear living in that way. (L.B., 130-131)

When he leaves her, she knows his intentions. After a period of intense, violent grief, she calms herself and goes downstairs to sing bitter-sweet ballads to her children as she waits for the inevitable announcement. At the end of the chapter, her husband brings in the body of her dead lover, announcing that he accidentally shot himself while hunting.

This unnamed lover is often considered to be Denham, who has been obsessed with Margaret since he first came to Ensdon and has recently learned that she is his half-sister.[42] Randolph Hughes, however, points out the problems with this assumption: there is no other woman in Denham's life, his love for Margaret seems not to be reciprocated, and he is not younger but twelve years older than she is.[43] He tentatively suggests that the lover could be Walter Lunsford, Herbert's older friend by four years whom Margaret, we are told, made much of and who played Gennaro to her Lucrezia Borgia.[44] But Fuller maintains that neither character is adequately developed in the novel and that the unnamed lover is actually Herbert, whose attachment for his older sister had already taken on a sexual colouring when he was only a boy, and who is definitely involved with another woman: Lesbia.[45] Swinburne thus seems to have constructed two endings for his novel, one in which Herbert watches Lesbia die, and one in which Herbert himself commits suicide over Margaret.[46] He appears to have decided on the former and latest ending and then to have gone back to add both the chapter in which Denham declares his continuing love for Margaret to Linley and discovers that she is his half-sister, and the references to Margaret's attentions to Walter. In both cases, he keeps the idea of incest alive, and may have intended to leave deliberately obscure which one had become Margaret's lover.[47]

The deep disappointment in love which Swinburne experienced when Mary Gordon refused him is also said to be recorded in "The Triumph of Time" and poems related to it. But here we have as many versions of the woman, the nature of the love, and the reasons it ends as we have in the novels. In "The Triumph of Time" itself, the woman the speaker adores is, as Lang points out, associated with roses and song, and appears to be dark-haired.[48] She is also dark-haired in "Before Parting" and "Before Dawn," and has the same dark and lithe limbs in "Love and Sleep" as she has in "Before Dawn."[49] But the cruel amorousness of this sleek woman, often seen as a "black pantheress" and associated with the heat of the "south,"[50] does not entirely accord with her indifference to, perhaps deliberate unawareness of, the speaker's love in "The Triumph of Time," or with her commitment to the conventions of marriage in this central poem. Furthermore, in other poems of the volume which may with equal validity be considered personal ones,[51] she is golden-haired, as she is in "An Interlude" and "Autumn."[52] And the prevalent image of the rose is used by Swinburne to signify not only the potential of love, actualized or not, but also the impossibility of love: in "Fragoletta," for instance, the woman is an hermaphroditic "double rose" and has a cold and "virginal strange air"; and in "Satia Te Sanguine" it is the man who is a "ruinous blossom" swimming blindly like the "Lesbian Sappho" in a barren sea.[53] Most often, the image of the rose indicates the brevity of love.[54] In "Before Dawn," love, a "blossomless bower," lasts but a day, in "Rococo" but three days, and in "Before Parting," only a month.[55] The love is doomed because the lover is forced to come to the realization that the woman either does not "know" or "care" about his love, because it is of its very nature a light "interlude" which either she or he grows tired of and both will forget, or because she but played at love like a "queen" with her "bondsman" and then loved truly when it was too late.[56]

Only, then, by ignoring various inconsistencies (and, perhaps more seriously, the dramatic nature of many of the poems in Swinburne's first volume) is it possible to link the types of women in the poems with those in the novels: the idealized golden-haired woman who is committed to another man and the conventions of marriage (Margaret and aspects of Clara), the dark-haired and sensuous panther woman (Leonora and perhaps Redgie's conception of Clara), and the coldly indifferent woman who cannot feel love for a man (Lesbia). It is even more difficult to see in the poems and the novels the image of one woman -- Mary Gordon[57] -- and to trace the course of one relationship.

The problems with drawing a coherent picture of Mary and of Swinburne's relationship with her from the poems and the novels are compounded by the problems with the dates at which these works were written. Many of the works most often associated with Mary actually pre-date the crucial period in Swinburne's relationship with her. A Year's Letters was written in 1862,[58] certainly long before Mary was married to Colonel Leith and in all likelihood before she announced to Swinburne her intention to marry the older man.[59] Lesbia Brandon is first alluded to by Swinburne in 1864, but parts of it seem to have been written earlier; in any case, Margaret's marriage and four children do not reflect the facts of Mary's life at that time. The problems with dating "The Triumph of Time" -- in which the woman also appears to be already married, the "flesh" of another man's "flesh"[60] -- have been outlined by McGann. Although this key poem (and "A Leave-Taking," verses of which appear on the same sheet as verses of "The Triumph of Time"[61]) cannot be dated with certainty, Gosse originally associated it and Swinburne's disastrous love affair with 1862, and many of the poems linked with "The Triumph of Time" are known to have been written between 1861 and 1863. As McGann concludes,

> the evidence of the poems, plays, and prose always tends to push the date of Swinburne's love catastrophe back toward 1862 whereas the evidence of history always inclines to push it forward to 1864.[62]

An attempt to resolve these two problems could lead to a search for an earlier experience which had emotional significance for Swinburne, and perhaps back to a conjecture which was first introduced and immediately rejected by Randolph Hughes. In his article entitled "Unpublished Swinburne" (1948), Hughes presents a fragmentary and unpublished poem written to a woman who appears to be in or leaving for Italy:

I write thus words for you, before the moon
Sows with waste silver half the saddened sea:
While one weak wind, the prisoner of some tree,
Flutters its wing and weeps, unhappiest

Of all the late year's plumeless brood that rest
A summer through, then tremble and awake;
With its keen sobs the grieved and grey poplars shake,
Angering the water-shadows; and a cloud
Across the narrowed rim of hill is bowed
Like one who listens. Are you sad to-night
With dear Italian distances in sight
To comfort in despite of rain and foam?[63]

Hughes links this poem with "By the Sea-Side," another early and unpublished poem which is addressed to a woman who is parting from the poet: "And so to-night I have you, and to-morrow /Long miles will sweep between us . . ."; and, "Will you remember when the days are fair /In the far southern lands?"[64] As they stand together watching night fall on the sea, he asks the woman (who appears at least now to be indifferent to his love) if she will remember the days they spent together wandering the countryside and the "one spring night [when] in your wet hair I wove a water-lily."[65] "By the Sea-Side" moves, by way of comparison with the lesser loves of the present, to an evocation of the "silent angel's face" of Lucrezia Borgia, for whom many men had died, and the songs and the "one lock of her hair" which are all that remain of her.[66] Swinburne had written (in "Gampese") to Pauline Trevelyan of this lock of hair when he was in Mentone in January of 1861:

> I am trying to write prose, which is very hard, but I want to make a few stories each about three or six pages long. Likewise a big one about my blessedest pet which her initials is Lucrezia Estense Borgia. Which soon I hope to see her hair as is kept at Milan in spirits in a bottle.[67]

Hughes also suggests that these two early poems, probably written in 1860, are reminiscent in theme, mood, and imagery of "The Triumph of Time"[68]; but because he accepts Gosse's account of Swinburne's love of "Boo," whom he supposedly met in 1862, Hughes surmises that these poems must be related to an "earlier, hitherto unnoticed love affair" of the poet.[69] The same suggestion could be made of these poems (and of "The Triumph of Time") if one accepts Lang's theory concerning Mary.

Wise's copy of the unpublished verse letter bears the title "An Epistle in Verse Addressed to Pauline Lady Trevelyan," and to his copy he added the information that the poem "was written by Swinburne in Oxford, and was addressed to Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, then touring in Italy."[70] But Hughes, who takes constant delight in pointing out the fallibility of both Gosse and Wise, says there is absolutely no evidence to link the poem with Pauline. He finds the idea that such love poems could be addressed to Pauline, then forty-four and the poet twenty-three, absolutely impossible.[71] Earlier, Lafourcade had also found Louis Gillet's suggestion in the Revue des Deux Mondes that Pauline was "la seule intrigue de la vie de Swinburne" absolutely "risible" because of this difference in age.[72] It may, however, be conjectured that the idea that Swinburne was attracted to Pauline is not entirely impossible.

As William Bell Scott's Autobiographical Notes and Raleigh Trevelyan's recent biography of her indicate, Pauline was a fascinating and youthful woman.[73] The portrait of Pauline which they draw is very similar to Swinburne's portrait of Clara in A Year's Letters and Margaret in Lesbia Brandon -- both of whom, it may be added, are concerned with the difference in age between themselves and a younger lover. Like Pauline, both are rather unhappily married to a somewhat distant older man. Scott points to a "want of humour and imagination" in Walter Trevelyan and suggests that Pauline was "a true woman, but without vanity, and very likely without the passion of love"; Raleigh Trevelyan, too, suggests that her marriage was not entirely successful but that Pauline had "religious convictions about the bond of marriage" and considered it "her duty to support her husband."[74] Indeed, Clara's husband, Ernest Radworth, is usually considered by the critics to be a portrait of Pauline's husband, Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan.[75]

Clara's nobly dutiful attitude to Ernest is quite in keeping with Scott's and Raleigh Trevelyan's remarks about Pauline's relationship with her husband. And Redgie's description of Clara as a "great angel" in charge of "souls" (one who has Pauline's hazel eyes, it may be added) (A.Y.L., 138) is an exact parallel to Scott's description of Pauline as his "never-to-be-forgotten good angel."[76] In fact, Swinburne himself is said to have called Pauline his "good angel."[77] The other side of Clara, her more daring and unconventional side, is also present in Pauline. Raleigh Trevelyan indicates that Lady Trevelyan was particularly known for her humour, frankness, energy and unconventionality. And Scott describes her as:

> small, quick, with restless bright eye that nothing in heaven or earth or under the earth escaped; appreciative, yet trenchant; satirical, yet kindly; able to do whatever she took in hand, whether it was to please her father in Latin and Greek, or herself in painting and music; intensely amusing and interesting to men she liked, understanding exactly how much she could trust them in conversation on dangerous subjects, or in how far she could show them she understood or estimated them.[78]

When William Michael Rossetti first met her in 1856, he wrote that she was "particularly frank, unaffected, and good-humouredly willing to be pleased."[79] Clara's description of her own "frank" and "simple" nature and her delight "(for a change) [in] things and people with some movement in them" is close to the description of Pauline provided by her friends and her biographer. These qualities in Clara had led Redgie to mistake her "for a sort of tied-up tigress, a woman of the

Sand breed, a prophetess with some dreadful mission of revolt in her . . ." (A.Y.L., 78-79). It is conceivable that Swinburne could have been led to a similar conclusion about Pauline by some of the unconventional antics she participated in with him. Pauline not only participated in Swinburne's violent vituperation against Napoleon III[80] and allowed Swinburne to tell her one of his shocking Queen Victoria satires,[81] but also, and here most significantly, once dressed Swinburne up in "female attire" and, as Swinburne reports, planned

> a dark project of passing me off upon Madame Sand as the typical miss anglaise émancipeé and holding the most ultra views; we made up no end of history about it, and infinite adventures for the British Mademoiselle de Maupin.[82]

Pauline seems to have little in common with Lesbia, but her similarity to Margaret is perhaps more striking than her similarity to Clara.[83] Herbert regards Margaret as a mother, just as Swinburne regarded Pauline with "filial" emotions.[84] Herbert went to live with Margaret and her husband when his father died; similarly, Swinburne apparently stayed with the Trevelyans at Wallington for a time after the death of his grandfather, Sir John -- the model, as Fuller suggests, for Swinburne's account in the novel of the death of Herbert's father.[85] Swinburne's visits to Wallington date from about 1853, when he was removed from Eton and sent to Cambo in Northumberland to be prepared for Oxford by a tutor, the Reverend John Wilkinson (and they continue on a regular basis until about the beginning of 1863). Margaret, Lady Wariston, expresses an interest in Herbert's education throughout the opening section of the novel; and Scott tells us that whenever Swinburne's tutor dined at Wallington, "Lady Trevelyan, who took a motherly care of Algernon, used to ask him how his pupil went on, receiving always the same answer, that he was too clever and never would study."[86] The Reverend Wilkinson, it should be added, probably bears little resemblance to Denham; but he could be related to the "parish clergyman" who was left in charge of Herbert when the Waristons were away (L.B., 7). Under his care, Herbert spent most of his time swimming and riding, as Scott also says of Swinburne.

The description of Margaret's relationship with her older husband again bears a resemblance to Scott's description of Pauline's marital situation, particularly to his suggestion that Pauline was probably "without the passion of love." As Swinburne says of Margaret before her encounter with the unidentified lover, "of one thing only she never thought; of love. This emotion had never yet even grazed her in passing" (L.B., 85).[87] Swinburne also suggests in this chapter that Margaret "was vexed by the great world," that she "was not brilliant in society, and her beauty shone there through a cloud" (L.B., 84 and 85); however, she gradually became known for her small gatherings of "picked guests" at Ensdon "during the country season," and there she was "warmer and really brighter" and displayed a "delicate rapid grace, soft and keen as the play of light flame" (L.B., 86).[88] Similarly, Raleigh Trevelyan suggests that Pauline was "totally uninterested in 'Society,'" that in "general company she tended to be quiet, but when alone with friends she was vivacious"; and Scott adds that in the company of friends she was "quick, with a restless bright eye."[89]

The gatherings which Swinburne depicts in Lesbia Brandon, with their literary discussions on such subjects as Balzac and the purpose of art and their ballad recitals, may owe something to the evenings he spent at Wallington, where many of the Pre-Raphaelite poets, painters, and their friends gathered during the "country season."[90] Specific details of these gatherings at Ensdon of Lesbia Brandon could also be connected with Pauline. As we have seen, Pauline imagined dressing up Swinburne as a female and presenting him to George Sand, just as Margaret presents Herbert as Helen to Lesbia. Pauline could in some fashion be associated in Swinburne's mind with Lucrezia Borgia (whom Margaret herself dresses as), for he wrote to her of the famous beauty when he was in Italy. And she certainly was associated by him with the north and northern ballads, although there is no record that she sang them to him, as Margaret does to Herbert.[91]

It is tempting to suggest that the portrait done by Fairfax of Margaret discussed at one of these gatherings is related to the portrait done by William Bell Scott of Pauline, "her hair like folded wings on her head" and her face looking "twenty-eight instead of forty-eight."[92] But Scott's painting, according to Raleigh Trevelyan, was not begun until 1864; and there is a reference to a portrait of Clara done by Fairfax in A Year's Letters of 1862.[93] Nevertheless, Margaret's "double gold" of hair and eyes, a detail from Balzac, could be seen as a literary intensification of Pauline's light hair and hazel eyes. And, finally, the name of the heroine could be related to Pauline: Lady Wariston's maiden name is, of course, the same as Herbert's -- Seyton; and Pauline Trevelyan not only had a home at Seaton, in North Devon, but also on one occasion apparently called herself "Lady Seaton." According to the story, Pauline had rescued Holman Hunt's "Christ in the Temple" from possible disaster by quickly throwing her shawl over a curtain which had caught fire right next to the picture. In order to remain anonymous, she had identified herself as "Lady Seaton."[94]

The image of the beloved in "The Triumph of Time" (in which the speaker watches the sea and declares that he "shall never be friends with roses"[95]) has some similarity to Pauline: like Clara, this woman is already committed to another man and to a virtuous life (or the "strait gate") and, unlike Lesbia, she is unaware, perhaps deliberately, of the speaker's love.[96] Like the beloved of "The Triumph of Time," it is unlikely that Pauline ever swerved from her course of dedication to Sir Walter. But it is not impossible that Swinburne could have been attracted to Pauline in the same way that William Bell Scott is said to have been.[97] In the light of the similarities between the women of Swinburne's autobiographical works, particularly the novels, it is my contention that the relationship between Pauline and Swinburne -- particularly during the period when, according to Gosse, Swinburne wrote "The Triumph of Time" in Northumberland, late 1862[98] -- should be thoroughly investigated, and that the suggestion that Swinburne was attracted to Pauline should be reexamined. This conjecture would help to resolve some of the problems concerning not only the disparate image of the woman and the lover's relationship with her in Swinburne's novels and in the poems which have been considered personal but also the times at which the works were written.

The conjecture that Swinburne was attracted to Pauline may, indeed, only demonstrate the inherent dangers in attempting to extract specific biographical facts or even firm psychological data from a writer's works. For other possibilities do exist, ones which are met with in the semi-autobiographical works of other writers. Swinburne may, for instance, have drawn his portraits of the women in his novels from the features of women whom he knew personally in order to give the drawings both authenticity and disguise. We may never be certain of the identity of the woman (or women) whom Swinburne loved and lost, but it may be concluded with some certainty that some personal experience with love attained a symbolic significance for Swinburne and was given an important place in his depiction of his own acceptance of the harder realities of life -- whether they be of a psychological or a more metaphysical nature. When the novels are taken together (and with "The Triumph of Time") they may be seen to trace a process by which the young Swinburne figure is divested of his idealistic and optimistic view of life which is involved with (or symbolized by) his conception of the woman (particularly Clara and the beloved of "The Triumph of Time") and confronted with the forces of fate (as he is at Lesbia's death).[99] Similarly, in the later poems of lost love like "At a Month's End" and "A Forsaken Garden" (which do have a personal tone to them) the speaker comes to an acceptance of these forces, imaged here (as in many other works, including "Tristram of Lyonesse") as the changeless change of the eternal sea and the transience of flowers. In "A Forsaken Garden," for instance, the speaker imagines the joyful lovers who met in the walled garden by the sea and are now long buried, like the roses:

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
  Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
  And men that love lightly may die -- but we?"

He wonders if their love endured "their life through" or lasted but a season like the rose, but he knows that from the larger perspective it is of little consequence:

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
  Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
  In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
  Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
    We shall sleep.[100]

Both the lovers and the roses which flourished in this now barren landscape shall never "rise" from their "graves," and even these graves will eventually be engulfed by the eternal sea of changeless change (an image which recalls that with which Swinburne ends his "Tristram of Lyonesse"). The essential joy which accompanies the acceptance of the powerful forces of nature in "Tristram" and many of the "nature poems" is not present in this poem; but it is achieved by the speaker at the end of "Thalassius," the poem that Swinburne himself declared to be autobiographical in a "symbolic" fashion.[101]

It may be added here that McGann comes to a similar conclusion when he confronts the problem of the relationship between the women of Swinburne's works and the woman of his life -- except that he considers the early work strictly symbolic. Without negating the idea that Mary Gordon was Swinburne's lost love, and without considering the possibility of an earlier lost love, McGann points out that many of the early works which seem to pre-date Swinburne's supposed crisis with Mary manifest an "obsession with motifs of Ideal Love and romantic tragedy."[102] He suggests that Swinburne had already understood and presented in literary form the process by which he would be prepared to accept the realities of existence and become a poet of the forces of life. This process Swinburne presented in the form of the loss of the Ideal Woman, a form which has a distinct "literary geneology," even presumably before he lived through it with Mary. This "literary geneology" to which McGann alludes may be said to include the works of other Victorian poets mentioned in Chapter I, particularly Arnold's poems on love and Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. And, as suggested in Chapter III, Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" is also of specific importance to "The Triumph of Time."[103] McGann's conclusion is that

> Swinburne's real emotional and intellectual responses to the actual event [the loss of Mary] were all prepared for in his imaginative life. That it came upon him as a surprise and shock was itself imaginatively determined. Yet another part of him knew the truth -- knew, for example, that certain inevitable consequences always followed upon events of this sort. "Dolores" was the next fatal step, and variants on "Hesperia" were the ultimate beneficent conclusion. All these things had been preestablished in the myth, whose directions Swinburne follows in Poems and Ballads, First Series, in Songs before Sunrise (especially its "Prelude"), in "Thalassius." It constitutes the story of the making of the poet.[104]

"Thalassius" is, first of all, a final illustration of the difficulties in relating the works which have a personal significance to the events of Swinburne's life. In the poem, Thalassius also moves from a youthful idealism to a deeper knowledge of life, represented first of all by his personal encounter with the god of Love, who introduces him to a world of sorrow and change and death, and, secondly, by his subsequent Bacchic revelry with Erigone, his "dread lady." Lang, who does not mention Erigone, associates the first experience with Swinburne's loss of Mary.[105] But Fuller, who does not discuss the personal element in the poem, would have to associate Mary with the "dread lady," since she links Mary with Dolores[106] and the second part of Thalassius' experience of the world is usually associated with the "Dolores" poems. The problem cannot be solved, if one is to keep the connection with "Dolores," by relating Erigone to Adah Menken, for -- as suggested previously -- the "Dolores" poems were written before he met her. The conjecture offered here that Pauline was Swinburne's first disappointment in love does not solve all of the difficulties either, for the image of Erigone in "Thalassius" does not entirely cohere with the Lesbian image of Mary in the novels.[107]

"Thalassius" must, then, be read in a symbolic fashion; but even here, difficulties are encountered, as the diverse and often-conflicting critical readings of the poem indicate.[108] As McGann has suggested, the poem is related to "Hesperia" and to the "Prelude" of Songs before Sunrise,[109] and it recounts the symbolic process by which Swinburne himself grew to accept the nature of existence and prepared himself for his life as a poet.[110] The poem may be divided into three main sections: the birth of the hero; the education of the hero, which has two distinct phases; and the rebirth of the hero and birth of the poet. In Swinburne's myth of the poet-hero, Thalassius (the "sea-born") is the child of Cymothoe and Apollo,[111] the sea and the sun, or in symbolic terms the creative energies of nature and of man. It is important to note, firstly, that the creative energies of man, represented by Apollo, are not separate from the energies of nature -- as Apollo's link with the sun and lovemaking with the sea would suggest. The implication is, again, that these energies in man rise up into consciousness and light without divorcing themselves from their original connections. Swinburne seems to represent this original process in the birth of the individual child: "A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows /Was born out of the world of sunless things /That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows."[112] Secondly, it should be noted that the child is associated (as was Tristram) with the transient manifestations of nature, with the blossoms of earth and, most particularly, the foam-flowers of the sea.

This "sea-flower" (III, 296) is found on the shore "nearer sea than land" (III, 295) by the man who is to become his foster-father. Swinburne makes his child-hero a "fosterling and fugitive on earth" (III, 310) not because, as in poems like Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode,"[113] his essential home is a transcendent heaven, but because, as in other works by Swinburne, the great goddess of nature offers man no guidance and he must win for himself his true inheritance. Swinburne's myth is in this respect in accordance with the archetypal pattern of the myth of the birth of the hero: that the hero is a foster-child who must learn his origins or prove himself worthy of them is a common motif in folk-lore and myth (and a variation of it is present in the Tristram legend).[114] According to Jung, the myth of the hero's birth and subsequent exile and return is linked with the psychic process in which man is separated from his origins (the unconscious energies of the mind and nature, represented by the sea) by the development of individual consciousness and must attempt to re-integrate the forces of the conscious and the unconscious mind.[115]

The foster-father who initiates the education of the hero in "Thalassius" does, in one sense, teach him of his inheritance. In his song, the foster-father teaches the young child to place the highest value on "freedom," to participate in the forces of "love," to "hate" the forces of enslavement and tyranny, to have "hope" in the coming of the "twilight of all Gods" (III, 301) and the dawning of freedom for man, and to "fear" being unworthy of his inheritance. This inheritance is usually seen to be only the poetic wisdom of the foster-father, but the passage describing it focuses primarily on the joy that the young child feels in nature and fears he may lose (III, 301-302). Even though the first stage of his education is dominated by the influence of the foster-father, Swinburne also depicts the concomitant influence of nature.

The voice of the foster-father has been variously identified as that of Landor, of Hugo, of Mazzini, of Shelley, and of Blake, the men who inspired the young Swinburne. It may simply be said that the voice symbolizes the Romantic tradition as it is expressed in all of these men. It has often been assumed that Thalassius (and Swinburne) returns to this tradition after a negative period in which he was diverted from the cause (represented in the poem by the hero's next period of lust and dissoluteness and in Swinburne's works by _Poems and Ballads_). However, Donald C. Stuart puts forward an opposing thesis: the tradition which the foster-father represents is the patristic tradition which must be entirely overthrown or "exorcised" by the youth before he can become a poet.[116] The similarity between the ideas of the foster-father's song and the themes of Swinburne's _Songs before Sunrise_ clearly works against an acceptance of Stuart's suggestion.[117] But some of his observations do help to illuminate the poem. First of all, the song of the foster-father _is_ somewhat more idealistic and optimistic than we have shown _Songs before Sunrise_ to be. A section from the stanza concerning "hope" will illustrate this point:

> For she [hope] can see the days of man, the birth
> Of good and death of evil things on earth
> Inevitable and infinite, and sure
> As present pain is, or herself is pure. (V, 301)

The song is also devoid of any personal element; it does not consider the pain or sorrow involved in the individual's encounter with the darker realities of existence and the difficulties involved in his achieving a positive sense of freedom within this realm.[118] Secondly, the song the youthful hero hears has not been lived by him (just as the song which Tristram sings to Iseult in canto I of "Tristram of Lyonesse" is as yet unlived). In this sense, the foster-father's song is a didactic voice from without and must be both internalized and deepened and darkened by the hero's direct experience of the world.

The second stage of the education of the hero has been seen by Stuart not as a period of self-conscious and disillusioned dissipation, but as a necessary plunge into the world of experience. It is certainly true that the god of Love the hero encounters on his journey embodies a power that has not been included in the foster-father's conception of love. Stuart suggests that this figure represents the "human, irrational elements that the foster-father's conceptual idealism and absoluteness have ignored."[119] This beautiful figure with curled hair like "snakes" and a "serpent's" tongue (III, 303) has much in common with Milton's Satan, as Lang has established. And when the god speaks, the innocent youth finally learns that the name of the god is "sorrow" and "death":

> 'I am he that was thy lord before thy birth,
> I am he that is thy lord till thou turn earth:
> I make the night more dark, and all the morrow
> Dark as the night whose darkness was my breath:
> O fool, my name is sorrow;
> Thou fool, my name is death.' (III, 304)

The same sort of Miltonic echoes are present at the end of the first canto of "Tristram of Lyonesse," when Tristram and Iseult drink the love potion and are therefore, through subsequent experience, brought to an awareness of the death, darkness, and sorrow which are also part of the world of reality.[120] The implication in "Thalassius" is also that the "fall" is a necessary one which leads to a more comprehensive understanding of existence.

Stuart also suggests that the young hero's education is now in the hands of the mother, of the Dionysian energies of nature represented by the "Bacchic frenzy" of music and storm and embodied in the figure of the "dread lady," Erigone.[121] To many critics, as indicated previously, the "dread lady" is that of "Dolores" and similar works, and the world over which she rules is a world of sin, lust, and perversion.[122] But it may be suggested that she is actually similar in import to the image of the original Venus which underlies the image of her later incarnations, Dolores and Faustine, put forward by the speakers themselves -- the original Venus who does have her aspects of strife and destruction (as have all of Swinburne's Great Goddesses, and his Hertha-like Pan), but not the Venus who is relegated to only these aspects by those who have attributed her peaceful and beneficent qualities to Mary and yet indulge in and celebrate what they consider to be sin and evil. What Swinburne presents in this part of "Thalassius" is not the under-half of dualistic Christianity but the underside of Greek thought which tended to be overlooked by the Hellenists before Nietzsche. Stuart suggests that Swinburne's description of the realm the youthful hero now enters has much in common with Nietzsche's description of those Dionysian forces within nature and man which he found to be represented in the music of Greek tragedy.[123] He also could have suggested that the imagery in this section of the poem directly recalls the imagery with which Swinburne himself describes the sense of life present in the tragedies of

Aeschylus. Of particular importance is Swinburne's description of the Aeschylean woman, the embodiment of fate:

> We seem to hear about her the beat and clash of the terrible timbrels, the music that Aeschylus set to verse, the music that made mad, the upper notes of the psalm shrill and strong as a sea-wind, the "bull-voiced" bellowing under-song of those dread choristers from somewhere out of sight, the tempest of tambourines giving back thunder to thunder the fury of divine lust that thickened with human blood the hill-streams of Cithaeron.[124]

This passage is very similar to Swinburne's description of the forces that Thalassius now encounters:

> So from somewhence far forth of the unbeholden,
> Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,
> Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and golden,
> With sound of chiming waves that drown the thunder
> Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,
> Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,
> Terrible; firs bowed down as briars or palms
> Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze
> Fulfilled with clamour and clangour and storms of psalms;
> Red hands rent up the roots of old-world trees,
> Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas
> Made mad the moonless and infuriate air
> That, ravening, revelled in the riotous hair
> And raiment of the furred Bassarides. (III, 306)[125]

As was suggested in Chapter III, it is often difficult to distinguish Swinburne's awareness of the darker aspects of existence which he saw in the works of Aeschylus from the Christian and dualistic view of the darkness of the world which he saw in de Sade (both of which are explored in Poems and Ballads). It is also therefore difficult to see the central works of Poems and Ballads as a unified "monodrame," unless one looks beyond the dualistic perspective of the speakers of the individual poems and to the original Venus whose destructive aspects must be accepted by the spirit who is to achieve the whole vision of the speaker of "Hesperia." These difficulties are again encountered by the critic who attempts to interpret this section of

"Thalassius." But it may be suggested that both the poems in Songs before Sunrise which insist upon the creative and destructive nature of the life-force and the later "nature poems" which present the individual man's encounter with the strife and change of existence are an aid to interpretation. And it may be affirmed that in "Thalassius" Swinburne once again presents that encounter, giving it a definite personal application.

The second stage of the hero's education, which should be seen to begin with his journey (III, 302), is dominated by the image of the female, who here represents the fierce and dark aspects of the energies of nature -- just as the first stage of his education was dominated by the figure of the male. But here the hero also encounters the darker and more sorrowful aspects of man's mind, represented by the god of Love -- just as in the first stage of his education he encountered the more light and joyful side of nature.[126] The god of Love proclaims himself to be the youth's "lord before [his] birth" (III, 304), and he speaks the truth: the god of Love is but the other side of the dual-natured Apollo. The identification is, of course, a standard one; and it is enhanced in the poem by the suggestion that the words of the god of Love are like a "flame" that appears "To blear and sear the sunlight from the south" (III, 304), just as Apollo's "kiss [fell] fierier than the South" upon Cymothoe (III, [295]). The youth experiences, then, the more destructive potentials of both father and mother. Once again, it must be remembered that these potentials are not unrelated, and Swinburne mingles the two throughout his poem.[127]

After passionately experiencing the strife of existence, the youth moves on to the next stage of the "spirit" in the "monodrame" of Poems and Ballads: "that brief total pause of passion and of thought, when the spirit, without fear or hope of good things or evil, hungers and thirst only after the perfect sleep."[128] Again, this brief moment should not be identified with the resignation and desire for death which is expressed by the speakers of the specific dramatic monologues in the Proserpine group. Instead, it should be related to the encountering of the "peace" at the "heart of endless agitation" implied in "Hesperia" and presented in the "sleep-trance" of the later nature poems in which the enduring source of the temporal manifestations of nature is encountered. The same undersea imagery is used here to describe this "indeterminate moment":

> And in his sleep the dun green light was shed
> Heavily round his head
> That through the veil of sea falls fathom-deep,
> Blurred like a lamp's that when the night drops dead
> Dies; and his eyes gat grace of sleep to see
> The deep divine dark dayshine of the sea,
> Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-ways,
> Broad-based, or branching as a sea-flower sprays
> That side or this dividing; and anew
> The glory of all her glories that he knew. (III, 308)

In this fine, almost untranslatable passage the hero has, to try Campbell's language, encountered the dread threshold forces and achieved momentary union with the Great Goddess, the womb and tomb of life.[129] This moment is the beginning of his rebirth as a visionary poet. When he awakens from his sleep, he is welcomed by his mother, who has waited for him with a laurel wreath (III, 307) and, principally, by his father, who now bestows a blessing upon him (III, 310). The Apollonian state that he now achieves is not a simple return to first innocence, although he feels the same "joy" (III, 308) that was originally his. The higher state he achieves includes, grows out of, a deeper knowledge of the world. As Swinburne said of Aeschylus' tragedy, its "crowning prospect" is the "reconciliation" of "the powers of darkness with the coeternal forces of the spirit of wisdom of the lord of inspiration and light."[130] Nietzsche, of course, also spoke of the reconciliation of Apollo and Dionysus in Greek tragedy, although he later called the synthesis itself by the name of Dionysus.[131] That Thalassius has achieved this higher state is definitely suggested by the following passage describing the growth of his wings of divine song:

> And song shot forth strong wings that took the sun
> From inward, fledged with might of sorrow and mirth,
> And father's fire made mortal in his son
> Nor was not spirit of strength in blast and breeze
> To exalt again the sun's child and the sea's[.] (III, 309)

The passage points not only to the fact that the sun is now an "inward" force but also to the importance of "sorrow" and "mirth," emotions associated with the second stage of his education (III, 304 and 306-307). That the passage has this implication is suggested by a similar one in "On the Cliffs," the next poem in the volume. Here Swinburne addresses Sappho, the nightingale of song, and, as in other poems, identifies himself with the seamew:

> For songless were we sea-mews, yet had we
> More joy than all things joyful of thee -- more,
> Haply, than all things happiest; nay, save thee,
> In thy strong rapture of imperious joy
> Too high for heart of sea-borne bird or boy,
> What living things were happiest if not we?
> But knowing not love nor change nor wrath nor wrong,
> No more we knew of song.[132]

The implication is that "song" requires a deep knowledge of life and yet the ability to view one's individual pain and pleasure from a higher perspective. As Swinburne says to his "sister," Sappho, again in "On the Cliffs":

> We were not marked for sorrow, thou nor I,
> For joy nor sorrow, sister, were we made,
> To take delight and grief to live and die,
> Assauged by pleasures or by pains affrayed
> That melt men's hearts and alter; we retain
> A memory mastering pleasure and all pain,
> A spirit within the sense of ear and eye,
> A soul beneath the soul, that seeks and sings
> And makes our life move only with its wings
> And feed but from its lips. . . .[133]

The same implication is present in Apollo's blessing to Thalassius:

> "Because thou hast set thine heart to sing and sold
> Life and life's love for song, God's living gold;
> Because thou hast given thy flower and fire of youth
> To feed men's hearts with visions, truer than truth;
> Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering eyes
> The light that makes me music of the skies;
> Because thou has heard with world-unwearied ears
> The music that puts light into the spheres;
> Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth
> The sound of song that mingles north and south,
> The song of all the winds that sing of me,
> And in thy soul the sense of all the sea." (III, 310)[134]

Thalassius now occupies the visionary realm which is not divorced from but at the heart of nature, as is also indicated by the sea imagery in the following passage:

> Now too the soul of all his senses felt
> The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses dealt
> Through nerve and jubilant vein
> As from the love and largess of old time,
> And with his heart again
> The tidal throb of all the tides keep rhyme
> And charm him from his own soul's separate sense
> With infinite and invasive influence
> That made strength sweet in him and sweetness strong,
> Being now no more a singer, but a song. (III, 309)

As an individual and transitory manifestation of the forces of nature, a "sea-flower" (III, 296) or a "singer" (III, 309), he is still "mortal" (III, 309), but as a part of the eternal realm of "song" he has achieved immortality.[135]

In many of his later poems, Swinburne presents his dedication to the realm of Apollo, indicating that it is not distinct from his dedication to Hertha. Many of these poems move from a participation in the forces of nature, usually symbolized by the swim in the sea, to a related participation in the realm of Apollo, usually symbolized by the light of the sun; and others indicate that the effect of nature on the poet is bound up with the effect of the world of inspired deed and word. Other poems which cannot be considered "nature poems" are addressed directly to Apollo, while still others are addressed to the "gods" of his realm, including Sappho.

Chapter VII: APOLLO AND SAPPHO

In a rather light-hearted poem entitled "Pan and Thalassius," Swinburne reaffirms his enduring love for and his emotional identification with the forces of the sea rather than those of the land. In this sense, the Pan of this poem is the simple woodland god; and he asks Thalassius, the "sea-stray," why he has wandered into this realm and what he has to do with the "joy of the wild woods."[1] In the ensuing debate between them, however, both figures take on a more symbolic significance. As Swinburne's comments on the poem also indicate, Pan is not only the god of the woodland but also the "lord of the mystery of earth, and immanent godhead of -- or in -- the terrene All . . . ."[2] He is, then, the same all-powerful force that he is in "A Nympholept." But here it is suggested that he controls all except the soul of man, man's word and song, the realm which is represented by Thalassius, the "seed of Apollo."[3] Thalassius certainly does not deny the power of Pan. He admits that Pan is an eternal force and that those who "mourned or mocked at thee dead" spoke in error. He also accepts that Apollo's realm is derived from Pan's, offering no direct challenge to Pan's question,

Whence
May man find heart to deride me?
Who made his face as a star
To shine as a God's beside me?[4]

The issue at stake is, instead, the power of Apollo, and Thalassius retorts that only through the word and song of man may Pan's divinity be proclaimed and maintained. Only in man may the power of nature be recognized and enunciated, and man may choose to assent to or deny the truths of nature. Therefore Pan, the mythological symbol representing these forces (and, in this sense, man's own creation) depends upon the word of man. Indeed, Pan was kept alive when error was deified in the figure of the Christian God only by those who would not assent to the proclamation of his death:

> Too lightly the words were spoken
> That mourned or mocked at thee dead:
> But whose was the word, the token,
> The song that answered and said
> Nay?

Thalassius reminds Pan that song "gave back empire to thee /When power on thy hands lay broken," and that

> Song
> Can bid faith shine as the morning
> Though light in the world be none:
> Death shrinks if her tongue sound warning,
> Night quails, and beholds the sun
> Strong.[5]

In one sense Thalassius is only quibbling here, as he knows the true relationship between the eternal realms represented by Pan and Apollo;[6] but in another sense, he reaffirms many of the central ideas of Songs before Sunrise. In this volume, as we have seen, Swinburne indicates that his pantheism places ultimate emphasis on man, in whom nature achieves the light of wisdom and the power of self-direction. Even though man has used the creative freedom that is his within the inevitable working of "things" only to deny it by creating the false and tyrannical God and ascribing all creative power to Him, some heroic spirits have kept alive the memory of the "sun-god Freedom,"[7] who is Apollo, the true son of Hertha (or, here, Pan). In the poems of Songs before Sunrise the emphasis is placed on the spirit of heroic deed,[8] but in many later poems the emphasis is on the spirit of prophetic song. The prophets of song have, as Thalassius maintains, given back Pan's kingdom to him.

In a more serious work, one which is central to the Swinburne canon,[9] the poet also maintains that such prophetic songs have kept the god Apollo himself alive. "The Last Oracle" returns to the subject of the "Hymn to Proserpine": the defeat of the pagan Gods by the Christian ones. It opens with the message of the Delphic oracle to Emperor Julian in 361 A.D., proclaiming the defeat of Apollo, and with the final words of Julian: "Thou hast conquered, he said, /Galilean." It moves on to recall the dark centuries ruled over by the "strange" God, "When for chant of Greeks the wail of Galileans /Made the whole world moan with hymns of wrath and wrong."[10] But the poet himself does not despair, as does the speaker of the "Hymn to Proserpine," for he knows the true meaning of Apollo. The god is not the son of Chronos, or Time, as the Greeks made him. Instead, he is the father of all Gods because he is "the word, the light, the life, the breath, the glory" of the soul of man, from which all gods originate:

> Old and younger Gods are buried or begotten
>   From uprising to downsetting of thy sun,
> Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and forgotten,
>   And their springs are many, but their end is one.
> Divers births of godheads find one death appointed,
>   As the soul whence each was born makes room for each;
> God by God goes out, discrowned and disanointed,
>   But the soul stands fast that gave them shape and speech.[11]

As Swinburne explains in several letters which outline the poem (and which indicate its importance to him), the God he invokes is

> older than Time or any God born of Time, the Light and Word incarnate in man, of whom comes the inner sunlight of human thought or imagination and the gift of speech and song whence

> all Gods or ideas of Gods possible to man take form and fashion -- conceived of thought or imagination and born of speech or song. Of this I take the sun-god and the singing-god of the Greeks to be the most perfect type attained, or attainable; and as such I call on him to return and reappear over the graves of intervening Gods. . . . Thus Apollo-Paian, destroyer and healer, and not the Galilean, is established as the Logos which was not with but before God in the beginning, and is even now beholding the collapse, eclipse, and flight into outer darkness, of the God or Gods who vainly thought to have ousted him from the world as well as from Delphi, leaving the said world such deadly glories in the way of song as the *Inferno* . . . .[12]

Apollo, then, cannot die: he was kept alive in those dark centuries in which he was but "veiled" and hidden away by those spirits who were not striken "blind" and "mute" and continued to celebrate the divinity of the human soul; and now, as the time of the Christian Gods draws to an inevitable close, he will again be celebrated by all men.[13] As Swinburne says in his prose comments on the poem, "The Last Oracle" moves from the "remote wail of dubious appeal as to one distant or dead into a cry of confident expectation and then from a hunter's blast cheering on the sons of the morning-star (. . . Lucifer) to be in at the death of the Gods of midnight and twilight now at last run to earth, into a full and final triumphant invocation of the giver of light and song to appear indeed . . . ."[14] In "The Last Oracle," Swinburne again presents his faith in the dawning of a true understanding of the divinity of man, represented by the figure of Apollo, just as in "Pan and Thalassius" he also, although less directly, affirms the return of a true conception of nature, represented by the figure of Pan. Neither Pan nor Apollo can die, and the continuation of Apollonian song ensures the return of Pan.[15]

"The Last Oracle" is also related to many of the ideas and images of *Songs before Sunrise*, particularly of the "Hymn of Man," the poem which Swinburne suggested was connected with the earlier "Hymn of Proserpine" as "the birthsong of spiritual renascence" to "the deathsong of spiritual decadence."[16] In the "Hymn of Man," as suggested in Chapter II, Swinburne presents his cosmological myth of the birth of the winged god of Love and of the Word from the "shell world-shaped" of the Great Mother.[17] The god of Love is not directly identified with Apollo in the hymn itself, but he is named in one of the possible sources of the poem which Swinburne himself later translated, "The Grand Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes."[18] In this poem, which is (as Swinburne suggests in a letter) "half sacred, half secular, half humorous, half imaginative," the birds argue that

> the first-born of all things was a winged thing, divine and creative Love, who burst out from the shell of everlasting darkness with wings of gold, as a flower bursts out of the bud, and of Him come all the Gods and all generations of men and birds -- but the winged creation is the likest and nearest their golden-winged father and creator.[19]

The birds therefore triumphantly conclude "That we ARE to you all as the manifest godhead that speaks in prophetic Apollo."[20] The "Hymn of Man" moves from a depiction, in much the same imagery as in Swinburne's translation of Aristophanes and comments on it, of the birth of the god of Love, to the process by which man creates and deifies the false Gods, and finally to an anticipation of the death of these Gods and the restoration of the divinity of the spirit of man, which is Apollo.

"The Last Oracle" also draws together many of the ideas and images associated with the interrelated process by which the individual spirit recovers truth. In "Hesperia," the first poem to present the achievement of psychic reintegration, Hesperia, the "dream that abides" after strife and "slumber," is associated with the central qualities of

Apollo: light, birds, and music.[21] As suggested in Chapter III, behind the poem is the journey of the hero which is related to the progress of the sun: from fiery passion, to oblivion beneath the waves, then to a rebirth and renewal. It is also interesting to note in this context that a cancelled passage from "Hesperia" quoted by Lafourcade links the woman symbol of this poem even more directly with the symbol of Apollo:

> The summer is hot in thine eyes and thine hair in a royal effusion,
> Shines as the gold far west that tells if the sun be in sight,
> As the ghost of the golden-haired god overthrown and cast out of heaven . . . .[22]

Hesperia comes to the speaker from the "region of stories," "of songs," and "of memories,"

> From the bountiful infinite west, from the happy memorial places
> Full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of the dead,
> Where the fortunate islands are lit with the light of ineffable faces,
> And the sound of a sea without wind is about them, and sunset is red[.][23]

These islands are the Elysian Isles, but, as suggested previously, they were confused by Apollodorus and others with the land of the Hyberboreans, the worshippers of Apollo. The "heaven" of Hesperia and Apollo is not a separate and transcendent realm but at the heart of nature and of man. It is the image of the recovery of that internal state which allows man to meet the strife of existence (symbolized in the poem by the ride through life with Hesperia); and, as is at least suggested in "Hesperia," it is associated with the achievement of immortality by continuing to live on in the memory of others through heroic deed or prophetic song.[24] The recovery of that internal state is also presented both in the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise, in which the "Youth" recognizes that his "own soul's light" is his only guide, and in the "Epilogue" to the volume, in which the swimmer points others "toward the sun for mark," the collective light of man's soul.[25] And the achievement of the immortal realm of song is presented in "Thalassius," in which the poet has achieved "inward" sunlight and has grown wings.[26]

In this context we may return to "Tristram of Lyonesse," for Tristram also achieves that inner state elsewhere identified with Apollo which allows him to accept with joy the "whole nature of things"; and, as is suggested in the "Prelude" to the poem, through Swinburne's own participation in the force of love and song, Tristram's sense of existence has been immortalized in song and is part of the memory of man. As was indicated in Chapter V, the force of Love celebrated in the "Prelude" is the same force as Hertha; yet Love is also identified here with the winged sun-god of song. It must be remembered that Hertha includes within her the divine spirit of man, and that when Swinburne opposes Apollo to Pan he is speaking of aspects of the same truth.[27] Thus, here the force of Love both "wrought the whole world without stroke of hand," as does Hertha, and is the "fire within thee and the light above," as is Apollo.[28] It is important to note, as well, that in the "Prelude" to "Tristram" Swinburne also ascribes qualities to the sun-god Apollo which are often linked with Christ, the Light and the Logos of Christian thought.[29] Swinburne's description of the zodiac of twelve famous women (including Helen, Rosamond, Cleopatra, and Iseult herself) through which the sun-god moves is his own transformation of the Christian symbol of the twelve apostles and Christ as the twelve sphered signs of the zodiac and the sun.[30] At the same time, this rather difficult section of the "Prelude" also alludes to Dante, and many of the women Swinburne places in his heaven were confined to hell in Dante's Inferno, the work which Swinburne named in his comments on "The Last Oracle" as representative of the "deadly glories" of song which were produced after Apollo was banished from Delphi.[31] It may be suggested, then, that Swinburne also presents in his heaven of women an inversion of the Inferno and, as he does in the last canto of "Tristram," an alternative to Dante's hell. Yet, as McGann notes, Swinburne also seems to imply that even those poets who consciously work to impress upon the world the word of the false God actually work to deify Apollo, if they are true poets: Dante, who knew not what he did,[32] actually immortalized his women by so movingly depicting the passion and pain of their lives. He accomplished through his art what his message belies.[33]

As the link between Hesperia and Apollo would suggest, the god is also present in the "nature poems." The state symbolized by Apollo may be identified with the "prophetic" vision of the "nature poems," and should be connected with McGann's conception of Swinburne's "sleep-trance" and "boundary situation." Apollo himself is directly invoked in several of the "nature poems,"[34] including "Off Shore," a poem mentioned briefly in Chapter IV. The poem begins with the swimmer's dive down into the "subtle and tangible /Gloom without form" of the sea's "womb,"[35] the symbol in other nature poems like "In Guernsey" and "The Lake of Gaube" of the death-like moment of integration with the original sources within and without and of renewal.[36] The swimmer who "crosses [their] zone" encounters the undersea flowers and foliage which "gleam" in the dimness "As to prisoners in bondage the light of their dreams." These branches and blossoms are, Swinburne continues,

> Not as prisoners entombed

Waxen haggard and wizen,
But consoled and illumined
In the depths of their prison
With delight of the light everlasting and vision of dawn on
them risen[.][37]

This complex metaphor suggests that the downward swimmer is in touch with the dark and dim sources of life and is aware of the potential of light within nature and man.[38]

The poem moves back to the surface of multëity, to the world which is controlled and eternally transformed by the forces of sea, wind, and sun. The transience of the things of this world through which the swimmer now moves is conveyed by the use of the interlocking images of the "wings" of ships, birds, and butterflies and the "flowers" of butterflies and sea foam, all momentarily "enkindled" by wind and sun[39] -- the same images which were employed in "Tristram of Lyonesse" to convey the idea of transience.[40] In "Off Shore" Swinburne uses this method of interlocking metaphor in order to convey "the unity of existence, no matter what its transformations, which are always many."[41] The following passage, which begins with a comparison of the flight of birds to the flight of butterflies (which is itself presented within the larger comparison of the "wings" of moving ships to the wings of birds in flight), will illustrate his method:

But the sun stands fast,
And the sea burns bright,
And the flight of them [the birds] past
Is no more than the flight
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings poised and afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers
In a festival way
When hours after hours
Shed grace on the day,
White blossomlike butterflies hover and gleam through the snows of the
spray.

Like snow-coloured petals
  Of blossoms that flee
From storm that unsettles
  The flower as the tree
They flutter, a legion of flowers on the wing, through the field of the sea.[42]

The idea of transience is conveyed not only by the fragility of the things which are compared, but also by the method of transforming metaphor which "dissolves," as it were, in the final image of the snowflake.[43] It is also more directly conveyed by the suggestion that all these forms are like "flocks" which are gathered by the "herdsman," the wind, for "division of death":

As a flock by division
  Of death to be thinned,
As the shades of a vision
  Of spirits that sinned;
So glimmer their shrouds and their sheetings as clouds on the stream of the wind.[44]

As this quotation suggests, all of these forms are implicitly compared to the spirit of the individual man; the large, governing metaphor of this part of the poem is the implicit comparison of the swimmer to all of these transient forms.[45] The comparison works to suggest that the individual man is but a transient manifestation of nature and must die. Yet it is also suggested that he also endures as a part of the unconscious and ever-transforming forces of nature and, here, as a part of the eternal realm of song.[46] As the poet swims in the sea his face is enkindled by the sun and his heart is illuminated by the light of Apollo:[47]

As my soul has been dutiful
  Only to thee,
O God most beautiful,
  Lighten thou me,
As I swim through the dim long rollers, with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us
All in accord,
Father and lord of us
Always adored,
The slayer and the stayer and the harper, the light of us all and our lord.[48]

The poem moves, then, from the return to the deep womb of the mother up to the identification with the father, the highest power of nature.

Everett G. Powell, who comments on an early draft of the poem, notes that "Off Shore" is written in the stanza of "Hertha"; he suggests that it is a continuation of the ideas of this central poem of Songs before Sunrise, and indicates that some of the qualities of Hertha are here ascribed to Apollo.[49] "Off Shore" is certainly linked with "Hertha," but it is a more personal version of the earlier poem, or of the "Prelude" and the "Epilogue" of the "Hertha" volume, and, in this sense, is most like "On the Downs."

"By the North Sea" is another important nature poem which directly includes the image of Apollo. Like "Off Shore," it moves from the Great Mother to Apollo, her highest aspect. As suggested in Chapter IV, the pattern of the poem is closer to that of "On the Downs" of Songs before Sunrise than is "Off Shore": here the poet also stands on the desolate shore overlooking the barren wastes of the sea, and gradually moves out and up in spirit to embrace the "whole nature of things," both the destructive and creative aspects of existence, and to comprehend the "secret word our Mother saith /In silence."[50] In "On the Downs," the "wise word of the secret earth, . . . /With all her tongues of life and death /With all her bloom and blood and breath," is of the divinity of man and of the creative power of his word;[51] in "By the North Sea," this wisdom is represented by Apollo, her son and the collective spirit of man.

As Swinburne himself suggests in "By the North Sea," "Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder /Grows his heart who journeys here alone" (2, III, 93). And in the poem, the speaker achieves this state by gradual advances forward and upward, moving back each time to the scene of desolation and death before him and including its truth in his subsequent and higher advance.[52] He finally achieves a higher and all-inclusive perspective of "joy" which was at first attributed in the poem only to the seamew (11, I, 88). McGann has suggested that the poem proceeds by three's: the first part of the poem (Section I) focuses on the sea, the second (III and IV) on the wind, and the third (VI and VIII) on the sun (II and V being brief transitions) -- the three natural forces which, in the introductory dedication, bring man to a knowledge of the word of life.[53] There are, though, problems with dividing this complex poem in such a fashion: as in "The Triumph of Time," the sea, primarily a symbol of the destructive powers of nature, is the focus of all the speaker's thoughts and emotions and, although they do predominate in the sections McGann names, the wind and the sun are present in all parts of the poem. It is perhaps more instructive to follow, instead, the fluctuations of the speaker's mood and the gradual development, not present in "The Triumph of Time," of this Apollonian state of mind.

The poem begins with the speaker's awareness of the desolation and destruction which dominates in the scene immediately before him. Swinburne describes the governing impression of this scene in his comments on the poem:

> the dreary beauty, inhuman if not unearthly in its desolation, of the innumerable creeks and inlets . . . which make of the salt marshes a fit and funereal setting . . . for the supreme

> desolation of the relics of Dunwich; the . . . awful solitude of a wilderness on which the sea has forbidden man to build or live, overtopped and bounded by the tragic and ghastly solitude of a headland on which the sea has forbidden the works of human charity and piety to survive . . . .[54]

In the poem itself, the speaker sees and feels only death in the scene: the crumbling graves and monuments on the barren shore, and the unmarked graves beneath the cruel sea. However, as he contemplates the scene, his spirit moves for a moment up and out of its own death-like condition with the thought that rest accompanies death, that the "doom of death" and the God (Death himself, who makes love to the sea) is "gentler" than the God of "judgment, the sword and the rod" (14, I, 89). Yet (as is consistently maintained by Swinburne) absolute knowledge and certainty of what lies beyond the grave is not available to man, and is as elusive as the shade of Anticleia was to Odysseus, her son, when he attempted to embrace her in the underworld (13 and 14, III, 96).[55] With this thought, the speaker moves back to present Hades surrounding him, darker than the underworld of Greece:

> All too sweet such men's Hellenic speech is,
>   All too fain they lived of light to see,
> Once to see the darkness of these beaches,
>   Once to sing this Hades found of me
> Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and reaches,
>   Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste, and sea. (15, III, 96)[56]

Section IV begins with another advance of the spirit outward and upward, as the opening lines indicate: "But aloft and afront of me faring /Far forward as folk in a dream /That strive . . ." (1, IV, 97). The speaker's thoughts, now provoked by the wind which has risen, are subtly linked to his previous ones, for he compares the free, directionless movement of the wind with the goal-directed journey of such "folk" as Odysseus.

> More glad than a man's when it reaches
>   That end which is sought from of old
> And the palm of possession is dreary
>   To the sense that in search of it sinned;
> But nor satisfied ever nor weary
>   Is ever the wind. (6, IV, 98-99)[57]

Such men have "sinned" because, unlike the wind, they have not taken the "delight that he takes but in living" in the world from which comes both the darkness of sorrow and the light of joy (7 and 8, IV, 99). The speaker, who has been emotionally uplifted by the wind itself, moves forward intellectually with the thought that there are some men whose spirits are at one with the wind:

> There are those too of mortals that love him,
>   There are souls that desire and require,
> Be the glories of midnight above him
>   Or beneath him the daysprings of fire:
> And their hearts are as harps that approve him
>   And praise him as chords of a lyre[.] (12, IV, 100)

And:

> For these have the toil and the guerdon
>   That the wind has eternally: these
> Have part in the boon and the burden
>   Of the sleepless unsatisfied breeze,
> That finds not, but seeking rejoices
>   That possession can work him no wrong:
> And the voice at the heart of their voice is
>   The sense of his song. (14, IV, 101)

This may be considered the turning-point in the poem in several senses. As is suggested at the end of Section IV, the speaker has achieved that joy which prepares him to comprehend with his "spirit of sense" the word of nature.[58] The speaker here sees the winds of change as both destructive and creative, whereas previously the processes of nature (symbolized by the sea) were seen as almost exclusively destructive.[59] Furthermore, the wind is presented as a kind of intermediary between the deepest darkness of nature (associated with the sea) and Apollo, her highest light. Such an interpretation is, for example, suggested by the following lines:

> the sun's eye flash[es] to the sea's
> Live light of delight and of laughter,
> And her lips breathe back to the breeze
> The kiss that the wind's lips waft her[.] (2, II, 91)

The wind, then, may be seen as the Holy Spirit,[60] the middle term between Mother and Son. (Of course, Swinburne's pagan trinity is "one-in-three," and the three-personed God is Hertha.)

When the speaker moves back to contemplate the sea, this time both the negative and positive aspects of nature, his "near" and "far" vision, are combined. The sea is now seen as the symbol of all of existence (including man) and may be compared to the all-encompassing symbol of Hertha. Her negative qualities are accepted by the speaker in stanza three of Section V:

> The grime of her greed is upon her,
> The sign of her deed is her soil;
> As the earth's is her own dishonour,
> And corruption the crown of her toil:
> She hath spoiled and devoured, and her honour
> Is this, to be shamed by her spoil. (3, V, 102)

And her positive qualities are recognized in stanza four:

> But afar where pollution is none,
> Nor ensign of strife nor endeavour,
> Where her heart and the sun's are one,
> And the soil of her sin comes never,
> She is pure as the wind and the sun,
> And her sweetness endureth for ever. (4, V, 103)[61]

The opening stanza of this brief section suggests that the speaker understands both the eternal alternation of creation and destruction in nature and his own part in the process:

> For the sea too seeks and rejoices,
> Gains and loses and gains,
> And the joy of her heart's own choice is
> As ours, and as ours are her pains:
> As the thoughts of our hearts are her voices,
> And as hers is the pulse of our veins. (1, V, 102)

After recognizing the eternal cycles of creation and destruction in nature, he moves back once more in Section VI to contemplate the "darkness" of "death" and "change" (1-3, VI, 104); and, finally, in stanza VII, he moves forward to dedicate himself to the light.

The darkness which is considered in Section VI is the darkness of both nature and man's mind. First of all, the speaker acknowledges the original darkness involved in the creation of the world by Night, the Mother,[62] and the continuation of the darkness of change and death by the agency of Time. This destructiveness is an eternal truth which must be recognized by man; but at the same time, as the speaker realizes, it has its positive aspect. As the speaker gazes again at the Christian monuments about him which are gradually being destroyed by the forces of sea and wind, he realizes that the destructive power of Time will inevitably bring an end to the power and reign of the Christian God, who is the darkness of man's mind deified.[63] With this knowledge, the speaker moves finally to choose to participate in the light and to dedicate himself to the sun, the symbol of Apollo, who is himself the symbol of man's divine light and wisdom:

> Though the Gods of the night lie rotten
>   And their honour be taken away
> And the noise of their names forgotten,
>   Thou, Lord, art God of the day.
> Thou art father and saviour and spirit,
>   O Sun, of the soul that is free
> And hath grace of thy grace to inherit
>   Thine earth and thy sea. (5, VII, 109)

The poem ends with the speaker's personal dedication to Apollo:

> I, last least voice of her voices,
>   Give thanks that were mute in me long
> To the soul in my soul that rejoices
>   For the song that is over my song
> Time gives what he gains for the giving
>   Or takes for his tribute of me;

My dreams to the wind everliving,
    My song to the sea. (7, VII, 110)

His dedication here is not different from the dedication of self and song to Hertha in "Mater Triumphalis" of Songs before Sunrise[64] or in "The Garden of Cymodoce" and other "nature poems," for, as it must again be insisted upon, Apollo is but the highest manifestation of Hertha. As was suggested in Chapter IV, in "The Garden of Cymodoce," Swinburne presents the source of "song" and "light" as the Mother, symbolized again by the sea. In the poem he also indicates that the source of his own song is his joyful acceptance of her "divine contraries":

> For song I have loved with second love, but thee,
> Thee first, thee, mother; ere my songs had breath,
> That love of loves, whose bondage makes man free,
> Was in me strong as death.[65]

Indeed, as both "The Garden of Cymodoce" and "By the North Sea" indicate, his song is not only derived from but also often concerned with the joyful acceptance of the Mother and consequent ability to be part of her realm of song.

"The Garden of Cymodoce" is similar to "By the North Sea" in many respects. It also begins with the contemplation of the fierce and cruel sea; it ends, however, not with an invocation to Apollo but with the celebration of an Apollonian poet, Hugo. As suggested previously, the poem presents the island at the middle of the fierce rage of nature as a symbol of the achievement of the state of joyful freedom by the individual man. The island is linked with the sea-flower and the seamew,[66] which, together, suggest not only the joy of this state but also the transience of the individual spirit.[67] The island is at first identified with the spirit of Hugo, as Swinburne recalls his presence there when France was overcome by death, darkness, and slavery.[68] And he celebrates the "Promethean"[69] spirit of Hugo:

> More strong than strong disaster,
>   For fate and fear too strong;
> Earth's friend, whose eyes look past her,
>   Whose hands would purge of wrong;
> Our lord, our light, our master,
>   Whose word sums up all song.[70]

However, as these lines suggest, when he moves back to the present, Swinburne identifies his own spirit with the island and Hugo with the sun which "enkindles" it to light and music.[71] This identification is reinforced by the comparison of the island illuminated by the sun to a child inspired by a God.[72] And it is made quite explicit at the end of the poem:

> the heaven of thy vast verse,
> Our master, over all our souls impends,
> Imminent; we, with heart-enkindled eyes
> Upwondering, search the music-moulded skies
> Sphere by sweet sphere, concordant as it blends
> Light of bright sound, sound of clear light, in one,
> As all the stars found utterance through the sun.[73]

This tribute to Hugo is in keeping with Swinburne's critical remarks on the poet, quoted in Chapter IV, which suggest not only that Hugo's works capture the spirit of nature but also that they work on Swinburne himself as do nature's forces. His comparison of crossing the Channel during a storm to reading Hugo's works is particularly relevant here, and may be requoted:

> And the impression of that hour was upon me the impression of his mind; physical, as it touched the nerves with a more vivid passion of pleasure than music or wine; spiritual, as it exalted the spirit with the senses and above them to the very summit of vision and delight. It is no fantastic similitude, but an accurate likeness of two causes working to the same effect.[74]

There are other poems in which Swinburne invokes in verse those poets he praises in his criticism, those poets who often capture his own sense of existence or whose spirits are nearest his own. The first group of poems, which includes "The Garden of Cymodoce," may still be considered "nature poems," as they intermingle the forces of nature with the powers of these "prophetic" gods. The two influences are constantly intermingled in Swinburne's mind. As he says in one of his letters, ". . . I don't . . . know any pleasure physical or spiritual (except what comes of the sea) comparable to that which comes of verse in its higher moods . . . ."[75] And in the "Dedicatory Epistle" to his collected poems, addressed to Watts-Dunton, he challenges the critics who would divorce literature from life and see them as separate realms:

> Not to you or to any other poet, nor indeed to the very humblest and simplest lover of poetry, will it seem incongruous or strange, suggestive of imperfect sympathy with life or deficient inspiration from nature, that the very words of Sappho should be heard and recognized in the notes of nightingales, the glory of the presence of dead poets imagined in the presence of the glory of the sky, the lustre of their advent and their passage felt visible as in vision on the live and limpid floorwork of the cloudless and sunset-coloured sea. The half-brained creature to whom books are other than living things may see with the eyes of a bat . . .; those who live the fuller life of a higher animal than he know that books are . . . part of that life . . . . Marlowe and Shakespeare, Aeschylus and Sappho, do not for us live only on the dusty shelves of libraries.[76]

In this comment, Swinburne suggests that some poets give us the very spirit of life and are forever part of our perception and conception of it. And in some of the works to which he indirectly refers here, he indicates that the sons of Apollo have captured the essence of nature and of man's existence in this world; in others, he suggests the influence of these poets on his own sense of life; and in still others, he contemplates their part in the general memory of man and the realm of Apollo.

In "Evening on the Broads," for instance, the desolate scene before him, much like that of "By the North Sea," is mingled with his memories of Shakespeare. The image of the cruel sea and its hungry encroachment on the land[77] brings to mind the image of Shakespeare's Perdita, who was left on just such a "Shelterless unknown shore scourged of implacable waves":

On the lapsing land that recedes as the growth of the strong sea strengthens
  Shoreward, thrusting further and further its outworks in,
Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower of her kin forsaken,
  Lay in her golden raiment alone on the wild wave's edge,
Surely on no shore else, but here on the bank storm-shaken,
  Perdita, bright as a dew-drop engilt of the sun on the sedge.[78]

The implication is that the scene symbolized for Shakespeare, and for Swinburne after him, man's place in the world. The natural suggestive potential of the scene is strengthened in Swinburne's mind by its symbolic implications in previous works.[79]

Similarly, in "An Autumn Vision," in the dark storm over the sea Swinburne feels the presence and the voice of Iago, and of Goneril and Regan.[80] The storm is particularly linked in his mind with the external and internal forces of madness to which King Lear was subjected in the play which was to Swinburne "by far the most Aeschylean of [Shakespeare's] works; the most elemental and primaeval, the most oceanic and Titanic in conception."[81] This scene and the memories which are inextricably bound up with it are a reminder to Swinburne of the continuance of darkness without and within:

The serpentine swift sounds and shapes wherein
The stainless sea mocks earth and death and sin,
Crawls dark as craft, or flashes keen as hate,
Subdued and insubmissive, strong like fate
And weak like man, bore wrathful witness yet
That storms and sins are more than suns that set;
That evil everlasting, girt for strife
Eternal, wars with hope as death with life.[82]

Yet in the harmonious peace which follows the storm, Swinburne feels the presence of Ariel, and of Cordelia, Rosalind, and Imogen. Both the scene and the memories it invokes are a reminder to him of the alternation of night and light in nature and of the possibility of man's dedication to the light. Even though, as his comments on King Lear indicate, Swinburne does not see in Shakespeare the Aeschylean process by which darkness and light are reconciled,[83] Shakespeare did delve to the depths of nature and of man and did present in perfect art all the potentialities of man's mind:

> if [Aeschylus'] supreme gift of the imaginative reason was no more shared by Shakespeare than by any poet or prophet or teacher of Hebrew origin, it was his and his alone to set before us the tragic problem of character and event, of all action and all passion, all evil and all good, all natural joy and sorrow and chance and change, in such fullness and perfection of variety, with such harmony and supremacy of justice and of truth, that no man known to historic record ever glorified the world whom it would have been so utterly natural and so comparatively rational to fall down before and worship as a God.[84]

Accordingly, in "An Autumn Vision," Shakespeare is part of the light of the sun:

> The wonder woven of storm and sun became
> One with the light that lightens from his name.[85]

Similarly, in "In the Bay," Shakespeare is the "sun" to Marlowe's "morning-star" and Shelley's "evening-star."[86] In this poem, which follows "The Last Oracle" in Poems and Ballads Second Series, the speaker occupies a "boundary" condition, a visionary position:

> Above the soft sweep of the breathless bay
> Southwestward far past flight of night and day,
> Lower than the sunken sunset sinks, and higher
> Than dawn can freak the front of heaven with fire,
> My thought with eyes and wings made wide makes way
> To find the place of souls that I desire.

And:

> here, where light and darkness reconciled
> Hold earth between them as a weanling child
> Between the balanced hands of death and birth,
> Even as they held the new-born shape of earth
> When first life trembled in her limbs and smiled,
> Here hope might think to find what hope were worth.[87]

From this visionary perspective, he feels himself in contact with the "trinity" of Apollonian gods, particularly with Marlowe and Shelley.[88] The question of whether their "souls" be as "deathless" as their "words"[89] is not answered in the poem and cannot be. But it is maintained that they do endure as an inspiration to other men:

> Because the days were dark with gods and kings
> And in time's hand the old hours of time as rods,
> When force and fear set hope and faith at odds,
> Ye failed not nor abased your plume-plucked wings;
> And we that front not more disastrous things,
> How should we fail in face of kings and gods?

They are eternally part of man's mind and of the forces of nature and of that realm which is both, the realm of Apollo:

> Ye rise not and ye set not; we that say
> Ye rise and set like hopes that set and rise
> Look yet but seaward from a land-locked bay;
> But where at last the sea's line is the sky's
> And truth and hope one sunlight in your eyes,
> No sunrise and no sunset marks their day.[90]

As the imagery suggests, the speaker occupies the same visionary perspective, but only momentarily: he is, as suggested in other poems which present the visionary moment,[91] still part of the world of change and strife and must accept the truth of that world if he is to achieve joy and song.[92]

Many other of Swinburne's later poems are concerned with the many sons of Apollo, those who have dedicated themselves by deed or word to his realm. These poems cannot be strictly called "nature poems": they do not present the speaker's communion with the forces of nature; nor do they present the speaker's communion with the sons of Apollo through the forces of nature. However, they do deal with many of the same ideas; and they often do use nature as metaphor in order, as in the prose criticism mentioned in Chapter IV, to capture the essence of these spirits or of their works. Swinburne himself, who insisted that his poems were not nature poems if "[m]ere descriptive poetry" was meant by the term and who preferred to divide his works according to form rather than subject matter, does suggest that

> there might be some excuse for the fancy or the pedantry of such a classification as should set apart . . . poems inspired by the influence of places, whether seen but once or familiar for years or associated with the earliest memories within cognisance or record of the mind, and poems inspired by the emotions of regard or regret for the living or the dead; above all, by the rare and profound passion of reverence and love and faith which labours and rejoices to find utterance in some tributary sacrifice of song.[93]

The poems in this group are of various types -- from formal elegies and odes to less formally classifiable eulogies like the series of "Prologues" to the works of Marlowe, Webster, and other Renaissance dramatists.[94] And they celebrate a diverse group of men, artists from Aeschylus to Philip Bourke Marston, philosophers like Bruno, and heroes like Orsini.[95] Aeschylus, the supreme "prophetic" god of song, is one of the figures celebrated in "The Altar of Righteousness," a poem which presents essentially the same ideas as the "Hymn of Man" and "The Last Oracle":

> For the light that lived in the sound of the song of his speech was one
> With the light of the wisdom that found earth's tune in the song of the sun;
> His word with the word of the lord most high of us all on earth
> Whose soul was a lyre and a sword, whose death was a deathless birth.
> Him too we praise as we praise our own who as he stand strong;
> Him, Aeschylus, ancient of days, whose word is the perfect song.[96]

And he is also present in "Athens: An Ode," a poem which deals with the same truths from a more political perspective.[97]

The series of sonnets written on the death of Marston may be considered to be representative of Swinburne's treatment not only of the death of a friend but also of the passing of a fellow poet.[98] Swinburne again expresses his belief that the soul achieves rest after the strife and suffering which is an inevitable part of life and which was particularly part of Marston's brief life.[99] This is the main theme of the sonnets, but Swinburne also suggests that Marston will live on in the memory of those who love him and commemorate his spirit in their works, and in his own song.[100]

The best known and perhaps most accomplished of the poems of this group is Swinburne's elegy on Baudelaire, "Ave atque Vale." Here, again, the suggestion is that Baudelaire has achieved final rest and, through his "flowers" of song, poetic immortality. As suggested in Chapter III, Swinburne differentiates Baudelaire's art from his own in the comparison he makes between the laurel of northern flowers he presents to Baudelaire's memory (the verses of "Ave atque Vale" itself) and the flowers of Les Fleurs du Mal:

> Out of the mystic and mournful garden
>   Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
>   Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
> Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants grey,
>   Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-hearted,
>   Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that started,
> Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
>   Among the days departed?[101]

Baudelaire's own flowers are of Proserpine and the medieval Venus, and in this poem Swinburne implicitly places him with the speaker of the "Hymn to Proserpine," who was also "athirst for sleep"[102] and with Tannhäuser, who was also unable to emancipate himself completely from the Christian perspective.[103] Yet because he has penetrated to the darkest depths of man's mind and revealed these impulses in perfect art, Apollo is also present to mourn him:

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunsetting,
God of all suns and songs, he too bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.[104]

As is indicated by Swinburne's treatment of Baudelaire in "Ave atque Vale" (and Dante in the "Prelude" to "Tristram of Lyonesse"), Apollo is a more pervasive god than he who is associated with the individual's recognition of the motherhood of nature and the divine freedom of man. Indeed, even though "The Last Oracle" focuses on those "morning-stars" who kept alive a true knowledge of Apollo during the centuries of darkness and anticipates the dawning of understanding of the fatherhood of Apollo by all men, it also suggests that Apollo is the source of all song, prophetic or otherwise. The poem avoids rather than resolves any possible paradoxes,[105] but they are resolved in Swinburne's prose criticism of other writers. In these critical works, Swinburne includes in the Apollonian realm all singers who have achieved the "harmony" of perfect art, have achieved both "internal" and "external music." But within this classification, made on strictly aesthetic principles, he presents his own order of singing gods, the highest being those who are in some fashion "on the side of the stars,"[106] the "prophets" of Apollo.

In his study of Ben Jonson, published in 1888, Swinburne suggests that all poets may be divided into two categories, the "gods," who have achieved "harmony," and the "giants," who are deficient in either "internal" or "external music":

> If poets may be divided into two exhaustive but not exclusive classes -- the gods of harmony and creation, the giants of energy and invention -- the supremacy of Shakespeare among the gods of English verse is not more unquestionable than the supremacy of Jonson among its giants.[107]

Even though he commends Jonson's comments on style and finds some fine moments in his work, Swinburne suggests Jonson is deficient in "internal music" (native impulse or instinct). Jonson does not have the "note of apparently spontaneous, inevitable, irrepressible and impeccable music" because "[t]he grace, the charm, the magic of poetry was to him always a secondary if not always an inconsiderable quality in comparison with the weight of matter, the solidity of meaning, the significance and purpose of the thing suggested or presented."[108] Swinburne's remarks here have much in common with those on Wordsworth's excess of "contemplation" and consequent tendency to didacticism. The implication here is that Jonson attempted to impose an intellectual order on his material from without, that his learning is not enlivened by emotion and "sensation,"[109] and that his works usually bear the stamp of laborious and studious effort and enforced restraint and reticence. In his earlier study of the Contemporaries of Shakespeare, Swinburne groups Webster and Tourneur with Shakespeare, and Marston and Chapman with Jonson. His comments on Chapman clarify not only his conception of the deficiencies of Jonson but also his general distinction between "gods" and "giants":

> In [Chapman] we shall find that intellectual energy has taken what it can of the place and done what it can of the work proper to ideal passion. This substitution of an intellectual for an ideal end, of energetic mental action for passionate spiritual emotion, . . . is as good a test as may be taken of the difference

> in kind rather than degree between the first and second order of imaginative artists. . . . In almost every page of Chapman's noblest work we discern the struggle and toil of a powerful mind convulsed and distended as by throes of travail in the effort to achieve something that lies beyond the proper aim and the possible scope of that form of art within which it has set itself to work. The hard effort of strong will, the conscious purpose of an earnest ambition, the laborious obedience to a resolute design is as perceptible in Jonson and Chapman as in Shakespeare and in Marlowe is the instinct of spiritual harmony, the loyalty and liberty of impulse and of work.[110]

Essentially the same distinction is present in Swinburne's critical comparisons of other writers. When comparing Emily and Charlotte Brontë to George Eliot, for instance, Swinburne outlines the same difference, although here he uses the terms "genius" and "intellect":

> In knowledge, in culture, perhaps in capacity for knowledge and for culture, Charlotte Brontë was no more comparable to George Eliot than George Eliot is comparable to Charlotte Brontë in purity of passion, in depth and ardour of feeling, in spiritual force and fervour of forthright inspiration. It would be rather a rough and sweeping than a loose and inaccurate division which should define the one as a type of genius distinguished from intellect, the other of intellect as opposed to genius.[111]

And the distinctions which Swinburne makes among the Romantic poets are also related to this general distinction between "gods" and "giants." We must be careful here, however, as Swinburne's treatment of the Romantics takes us into his finer distinction between the gods of song and the "prophetic" gods of song; but his discussion of Byron's deficiencies in "external music" (and, as mentioned previously, Wordsworth's deficiencies, which are more like Jonson's) may be seen to be related to his general distinction between "gods" and "giants." Swinburne directly employed these terms, it may be added, as early as 1869, in "Coleridge," and he came back to them throughout his critical career: in "A Century of English Poetry" (1880), for example, he gathers together his comparisons between both Shakespeare and Jonson and Shelley and Byron under the terms "borrowed from ancient mythology; the Giants and the Gods."[112]

Swinburne, as suggested here and in Chapter IV, also makes a finer distinction between types of "gods": all gods must achieve perfect "harmony" in art, but some gods are also "prophets." It is this distinction which, as we have seen, places Aeschylus above Shakespeare: both are perfect poets, but Aeschylus not only captured the dark and Dionysian storms of nature and man's mind in his art but also, according to Swinburne, presented the possibility of man's creative freedom within the confines of fate and therefore realized the true meaning of the light of Apollo.[113] However, Swinburne, who preferred both to praise and to put forward a tradition of "morning-stars" in the darkness of the centuries of Christianity, does his best to draw as many great poets or gods as possible into his highest category of "the prophetic." Sometimes, for instance, the awareness of the dark strife in nature and the inevitable suffering of man, the achievement in art of "tragic passion" -- particularly if it is sufficiently divorced from a Christian context -- is enough for a poet to qualify as a prophet.[114] There is, Swinburne maintained, "a latent mystery of terror which lurks in all the highest poetry or beauty, and distinguishes it inexplicably and inevitably from all that is but a little lower than the highest."[115] And it is, as we have seen in Chapter IV, this quality which Swinburne sees in the works of such poets as Shelley and Hugo, particularly in their use of the symbol of the stormy sea, or which he himself defines by using the symbol of the sea. It is also, to return to the Brontës, the quality which distinguishes Emily from Charlotte Brontë. Again, both are gods, but only Emily Brontë attains the heights of visionary "passion." Speaking of Wuthering Heights, Swinburne suggests that

> From the first we breathe the fresh dark air of tragic passion and presage; and to the last the changing wind and flying sunlight are in keeping with the stormy promise of the dawn. There is no monotony, there is no repetition, but there is no discord. This is the first and last necessity, the foundation of all labour and the crown of all success, for a poem worthy of the name; and this it is that distinguishes the hand of Emily from the hand of Charlotte Brontë.[116]

In an earlier comment on the same work, Swinburne linked this "tragic passion" with the joyful acceptance of the motherhood of nature, which is at the base of Swinburne's own visionary process:

> There was a dark unconscious instinct as of primitive nature worship in the passionate great genius of Emily Brontë, which found no corresponding quality in her sister's. It is into the lips of her representative Shirley Keeldar that Charlotte puts the fervent "pagan" hymn of visionary praise to her mother nature -- Hertha, Demeter, "la déesse des dieux," which follows on her fearless indignation of Milton and his Eve.[117]

At other times, however, this same awareness of the suffering and strife of existence -- whether a pagan or a Christian awareness -- is considered to be a prerequisite for achieving "song" and is not necessarily linked with "prophetic song."

It may also be noted (and with more certainty, since Swinburne's treatment of "tragic passion" is a somewhat ambiguous one) that Swinburne also tends to focus on those moments in which other poets most approximate his own conception of the divine freedom of man within the inevitable workings of fate, which is at the height of his visionary process. He focuses on those moments in which these poets not only capture a sense of fate with "tragic passion" but also seem to point to the possibility of "tragic joy," or at least of heroic endurance, on the part of man. If Emily Brontë does not qualify as a "prophetic" poet because of her "passionate" awareness of the forces of nature, she does qualify in Swinburne's eyes for the ultimate crown of

Apollo because of her conception of man's "liberty." Again, this quality distinguishes her from Charlotte:

> Nor had Charlotte's less old-world and Titanic soul any touch of the self-dependent solitary contempt for all outward objects of faith and hope, for all aspiration after a changed heart or a contrite spirit or a converted mind, which speaks in the plainsong note of Emily's clear stern verse with such grandeur of anti-christian fortitude and self-controlling self-reliance . . . .

Emily's last verses, Swinburne continues, manifest a "trust so strangely (as it seems) compounded of personal and pantheistic faith, at once fiery and solemn, full alike of resignation and of rapture . . . ."[118] In this respect she may be linked with Aeschylus:

> The stale and futile epithet of Titaness has in this instance a deeper meaning than appears; her goddess mother was in both senses the same who gave birth to the divine martyr of Aeschylean legend: Earth under one aspect and one name, but under the other Righteousness. And therefore was the first and last word uttered out of the depth of her nature a cry for that one thing needful without which all virtue is as worthless as all pleasure is vile, all hope as shameful as all faith is abject -- a cry for liberty.[119]

Similarly, Swinburne points to those moments in Shakespeare in which he could be considered to reveal a profound understanding not only of fate and character but also of the possibility and necessity of freedom. At such moments, Swinburne believes, Shakespeare reveals himself to be a "free thinker" in the "best and highest and widest meaning of the term."[120] When dealing with the question of Hamlet's supposed "irresolution, half-heartedness, and doubt," Swinburne suggests that Hamlet was profoundly aware of "unavoidable and unalterable circumstance"; but he maintains that Hamlet's famous "monologue on suicide and doubt" is "actually eclipsed and distanced at once on philosophical and political grounds by the later soliloquy on reason and resolution."[121] And at the same time as he points to the dark "fatalism" in King Lear he also maintains that the play presents Shakespeare's "deep and direct" "sympathy with the mass of social misery":

> A poet of revolution he is not, as none of his country in that generation could have been: but as surely as the author of Julius Caesar has approved himself in the best and highest sense of the word at least potentially a republican, so surely has the author of King Lear avowed himself in the only good and rational sense of the words a spiritual if not a political democrat and socialist.[122]

In the Elizabethan age, Swinburne points out, a sense of social "righteousness" began to "dawn" and was "prophesied" by Shakespeare in King Lear:

> Not political reform, but social revolution as beneficent and bloodless, as absolute and as radical, as enkindled the aspiration and the faith of Victor Hugo, is the key-note of the creed and the watchword of the gospel according to Shakespeare. Not, of course, that it was not his first and last aim to follow the impulse which urged him to do good work for its own sake and for love of his own art: but this he could not do without delivery of the word that was in him . . . .

"These things," Swinburne concludes, "were hidden from the marvellous wisdom of Hamlet, and revealed to the more marvellous insanity of Lear."[123]

Even when claiming for Shakespeare a possible "prophetic" status, Swinburne is careful to suggest that Shakespeare is a true poet and does not write in a didactic fashion. It may also be suggested that Swinburne does not judge him primarily on the grounds of his prophetic message. The basis of his critical judgements is, and continues to be, aesthetic. As was suggested previously, even though Swinburne saw in Byron a "passion and power in dealing with the higher things of nature, with her large issues and remote sources,"[124] because of his deficiency in "external music," Swinburne considered him a Titan (not in the Promethean sense applied to Emily Brontë but in the artistic sense).[125] Similarly, even though he found much in Whitman with which he could agree and felt some of Byron's "thrilling and fiery force"[126] in his verse, because of Whitman's tendency to didactic declamation, Swinburne considered him a Titan, as well.[127] That Swinburne's critical standard is fundamentally an aesthetic one may be seen not only in his reservations about Byron and Whitman but also in his reverence for Sappho, the "Tenth Muse."[128] Swinburne accords Sappho a central place in the Apollonian realm even though her art is not strictly "prophetic."

In his review of Rossetti's poems, Swinburne praises the poet's translation and amalgamation of two fragments of Sappho, "Like the sweet apple" and "Like the wild hyacinth flower," into one brief poem, "One Girl."[129] But he maintains, using the imagery of the first fragment, that the topmost apple of the "tree of life and song" was given only to Sappho by Apollo and that no one can reproduce "that ineffable glory and grace as of present godhood, that subtle breath and bloom of very heaven itself, that dignity of divinity which informs the most passionate and piteous notes of the unapproachable poetess with such grandeur as would seem impossible to such passion."[130] And in a brief article published after his death, Swinburne reaffirms his "lifelong faith" in the genius of Sappho. After presenting his conviction that the drama and the lyric are the "highest forms of poetic art" and that Aeschylus and Shakespeare achieved the greatest heights in the drama, Sappho and Shelley in the lyric, he gives his opinion of Sappho's place in the realm of Apollo:

> Aeschylus is the greatest poet who ever was also a prophet; Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist who ever was also a poet; but Sappho is simply nothing less -- as she is certainly nothing more -- than the greatest poet who ever was at all.[131]

In his qualifying comments on the doctrine of "art for art's sake," Sappho is virtually equated with post-prophets like Aeschylus:

> It does not detract from the poetic supremacy of Aeschylus and of Dante, of Milton and of Shelley, that they should have been pleased to put their art to such use [the presentation of "moral or religious passion"]: nor does it detract from the sovereign greatness of other poets that they should have no note of song for any such theme.

Indeed, Swinburne declares that he

> would give many patriots for one artist, considering that . . . the hoarse monotony of verse lowered to the level of a Spartan understanding, however commendable such verse may be for the doctrine delivered . . ., is of less than no value to art, while there is a value beyond price and thought in the Lesbian music which spends itself upon the record of fleshly fever and amorous malady.[132]

However, Swinburne does indicate elsewhere that he prefers the truly prophetic artist to the true artist, even though they are equal from an aesthetic point of view. And he also attempts to draw Sappho into the realm of the prophetic artist. As the comments on Sappho in "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (and the "Dedicatory Epistle") indicate, Swinburne praises Sappho not only because she has achieved perfection in art of "exquisite contraction and completeness"[133] but also because she has captured in perfect art a significant truth of "life" -- the fine passion and intermingled pain of each man's life. Sappho's verses, he maintains, are marked by an "intense depth of feeling expressed with inspired perfection of simplicity," are made up of "'all air and fire,'" and manifest both a "sweetness" and a "depth and fervour." They have the capacity to "strike and sting the memory in lonely places or at sea . . . ."[134] The particular note of her verses is, as Swinburne suggests in the "Dedicatory Epistle," heard and felt in the "'tumultuous harmony' of the nightingale's" song.[135] Indeed, as Swinburne himself indicates in a letter to Watts-Dunton, he was convinced that Sappho was the nightingale of myth and not Philomela:

> I don't think I ever told you, did I? my anti-Ovidian theory as to the real personality of that much misrepresented bird -- the truth concerning whom dawned on me one day in my midsummer school holidays, when it flashed on me listening quite suddenly 1) that this was not Philomela -2) in the same instant, who this was. It is no theory, but a fact, as I can prove by the science of notation.[136]

Had Swinburne attempted to "prove by the science of notation" Sappho's identification with the nightingale, he would have pointed to Sappho's own reference to the song of the nightingale in her poetry,[137] and to her comparison of herself to the mournful Philomel in Ovid's epistle in the Heroides, "Sappho Phaoni";[138] he would also have pointed to the classical authors who compared Sappho's "small and dark" appearance to that of a nightingale and who considered her the "nightingale of hymns."[139] In one of the poems in which he identifies Sappho with the nightingale, "On the Cliffs," Swinburne indicates that Aeschylus also heard the voice of Sappho in the song of the nightingale: he considers Cassandra's comparison of her bitter fate to that of the nightingale in Aeschylus' Agamemnon to be an indirect reference to Sappho.[140]

The note of "tragic passion" which Swinburne heard in Sappho's verse and which he identified with the note of the nightingale seems to qualify her as a prophetess. Rarely does Swinburne suggest, however, that Sappho achieved that sense of "tragic joy" which he associated with the energetic encounter with the powerful and dark forces of nature; which he related to moments in the poetry of Shelley, Byron, and Hugo; and which he represented in his own poetry by the symbol of the seamew or the swimmer who conquers the stormy seas. In an early poem included by Lafourcade in an appendix to his Swinburne's Hyperion, "The Nightingale," Swinburne does suggest that Sappho's nightingale song, which is compared to her plunge into the sea from the

Leucadian cliffs,[141] may be a celebration of the forces of nature, a participation in the stormy seas of existence -- as is the leap from the cliffs in "Tristram of Lyonesse." The echoes of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" tend to reinforce this idea.[142] But Swinburne also suggests that the song and the leap from the Leucadian cliffs may be the despairing desire for death caused by a disappointment in love -- as is Lesbia's metaphorical leap in the chapter entitled "Leucadia" of Lesbia Brandon.[143] Swinburne indirectly refers in "The Nightingale" to the two traditions associated with Sappho's leap from the cliffs: the first considers it to be a suicidal plunge caused by her despairing love for the indifferent Phaon; the second considers it to be a reflection of the sacrificial rites to Apollo in which a victim was thrown off the cliff with birds attached to his body and either perished or survived.[144] It might be supposed that Swinburne would seize upon the second tradition to suggest that Sappho, like Thalassius, had plunged to the depths of nature and was reborn as Apollonian poet. However, Swinburne does not entirely ascribe this pattern to Sappho; he saw in her poetry the note of personal pain, longing, and despair that was clearly related to the first tradition associated with her death, that of suicidal drowning.[145] Her tragic awareness or passion has a more personal and elegiac quality to it, as McGann suggests. "Sappho is . . . a classical epitome of the mournful and memorial lover, for ever frustrate of her insatiable desires and ceaselessly singing of the dooms of all human loves and hopes in her own songs of despair."[146] Accordingly, in "Itylus," Swinburne associates the nightingale's song with the memorializing of personal tragedy. The poem refers to the slaying of Itylus by Procne, but it intermingles with this classical myth indirect allusions to Sappho: "From tawny body and sweet small mouth /[I] [f]eed the heart of the night with fire"; and, "My heart in me is molten ember /And over my head the waves have met."[147] The implication is that the nightingale, Sappho, goes beyond personal grief and pain only by containing them in perfect art, and only thereby achieving the higher perspective of art.

Sappho's verses may be compared to the "memorial urns" which the "high Muses" present at the grave of Baudelaire in "Ave atque Vale."[148] Indeed, in this poem, Swinburne -- obviously with Baudelaire's "Lesbos" in mind -- implicitly compares the sense of life captured by Baudelaire in his verses to that of Sappho:

> Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
> Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
> The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
> That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
> Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
> Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
> The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
> Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong.[149]

And in his review of Simeon Solomon's art, he also links the two singers: Solomon's portrait of Sappho captures the sorrow and unsatisfied desire which is at the heart of her; and it is Baudelaire who would most appreciate the "strange beauty and abnormal refinement, [the] painful pleasures of soul and inverted raptures of sense" which mark Solomon's art generally.[150] As was suggested in Chapter III, Swinburne saw an "Hebraic" quality in both Solomon and Baudelaire which he could not have seen in Sappho;[151] yet, as we shall see in "Anactoria," Swinburne does attribute to Sappho a similar desire for absolute, transcendent unity, one which leads her to be painfully, often bitterly, aware of the negative aspects of existence, and even at moments to the desire for death.[152] In this respect she is associated, as we have seen in "Ave atque Vale" and "Itylus," with the barren and cruel seas and with the impulse to drown, rather than with the stormy seas (a symbol of the destructive and the creative aspects of nature) and with the swim.

Sappho's art is, then, always highly appreciated on aesthetic grounds by Swinburne; but it is not considered to be entirely prophetic by him, even though Sappho does occasionally achieve a note of "tragic joy" and she does often memorialize an inescapable aspect of life which must be accepted by the individual man. In his insistence upon the inevitable strife of nature and the suffering involved in man's life, the "northern" poet does feel a kinship with both "southern" singers, Baudelaire and Sappho; but he is also aware of significant differences between his conceptions of the cause of this strife and sorrow and his concomitant attitude to existence and those of Baudelaire and Sappho. Swinburne's two major poems on Sappho, "Anactoria" and "On the Cliffs," are an illustration of -- and, in the case of the second poem, an explanation of -- these similarities and differences. They are both, it may be added, difficult poems, not only because of the critical problems encountered when dealing with Swinburne's elusive technique of "multiplied poetic relations" or of the allusive nature of these particular poems.[153] They are also difficult because of the shifting attitudes of the speaker, Sappho, to life in the dramatic monologue, "Anactoria," and of the different attitudes of the speaker, Swinburne himself, to Sappho in the more personal poem, "On the Cliffs." But our exploration of Swinburne's conception of Sappho in other poems and in his prose will aid us in ascertaining the essential import of these two complex works.[154]

In "Anactoria," Swinburne has taken all of the attitudes of Sappho revealed in the extant fragments of her works and given them a sense of order and development.[155] The attitude to existence which governs the first part of the poem has much in common with the attitude of the Chorus (or of Althaea) in Swinburne's Atalanta. Like the Chorus, Sappho postulates a "high God" who exists above the world of change and pain and division, and who cruelly creates man's divided world. In fact, as several critics have noted, the central section of the first part of the poem, concerning the cruelty of the creator (lines 148 to 188, most of which Swinburne added to the poem at a later date, presumably to emphasize the importance of Sappho's concept of God to her attitude to life[156]), quite directly echoes one of the central choruses of Atalanta, "Who hath given man speech."[157] In Sappho's conception, this "high God" has created the world in his own image. It is a world filled with destruction and evil, she suggests in a passage later in the poem which anticipates the image of Igdrassil in "Hertha" in an entirely negative fashion:

> and the earth,
> Filled full with deadly works of death and birth,
> Sore spent with hungry lusts of birth and death,
> Has pain like mine in her divided breath;
> Her spring of leaves is barren, and her fruit
> Ashes; her boughs are burdened, and her root
> Fibrous and gnarled with poison; underneath
> Serpents have gnawn it through with tortuous teeth
> Made sharp upon the bones of all the dead,
> And wild birds rend her branches overhead.
> These, woven as raiment for his word and thought,
> These hath God made . . . . (I, 64)

Sappho also sees herself as made in the image of God, and she compares the cruelty which is in her love to that of God.[158] Swinburne, however, attributes her cruelty, and her despair, to her created image of God:

to her inherent dualism and her desire for absolute unity beyond life. Her unsatisfied longing is expressed in the following lines:

who hath cursed
Spirit and flesh with longing? filled with thirst
Their lips who cried unto him? who bade exceed
The fervid will, fall short the feeble deed,
Bade sink the spirit and the flesh aspire,
Pain animate the dust of dead desire,
And life yield up her flower to violent fate? (I, 62-63)

It is also expressed in her desire for absolute union with the beloved, which may be achieved only through death and which motivates both her sadistic and her drowning impulse:

O that I
Durst crush thee out of life with love, and die,
Die of thy pain and my delight, and be
Mixed with thy blood and molten into thee! (I, 61)

And:

I would the sea had hidden us, the fire
(Wilt thou fear that, and not my desire?)
Severed the bones that bleach, the flesh that cleaves,
And let our sifted ashes drop like leaves. (I, 57)[159]

These interrelated impulses may be associated with the dedication to the cruel Venus and to the Proserpine of immediate release put forward by the speakers of other central poems of Poems and Ballads; the speaker of "The Triumph of Time," as we have seen, expresses both impulses in his reaction to his disappointment in love and his lost idealism.[160] Sappho's attitude is perhaps closest to that of de Sade, the supreme "prophet"[161] of the speaker of "Dolores." De Sade held a similar view of nature,[162] and, of course, manifested the same sadistic impulses. As we have seen in Chapter III, Swinburne saw in de Sade a mere inversion of optimism and an incomplete emancipation from the dualism of theism. De Sade's malady is associated by Swinburne with Christianity but, as Baird suggests in his comparison of "Laus Veneris" to "Anactoria," in "the shift of time and place from Christian Europe to pagan Greece . . . Swinburne seems to be saying that it is not Christianity alone which he means to indict, but all theistic doctrines."[163]

Swinburne would have found some value in these attitudes of Sappho, just as he found some value in de Sade and Baudelaire. Swinburne also recognized the "mystery of the cruelty of things" (I, 62) and the pain of man's existence, and knew that they could not be ignored. He also attributed the same supreme cruelty to the "high God" of theism. But he went beyond Sappho by accepting the "divine contraries" of nature, the destructive and the creative aspects of Hertha, the Great Goddess and World Tree. He also went beyond Sappho by recognizing that the "high God" was but a creation of man's mind and that man does have creative freedom within the workings of fate. He would also, then, have found a more positive value in the attitudes of Sappho which he gathers together in the second part of the poem. Here, her "poet's pride"[164] reasserts itself, and she understands that she has gone beyond the destructive "high God" through her own creativity. Here she parts company with the members of the Chorus of Atalanta, who ultimately advocate silent submission to the cruelty of God. Although Sappho still thinks she has been created by a God who exists beyond the world of change and death, she understands that she will not be entirely destroyed by Him:

> Lo, earth may labour, men live long and die,
> Years change and stars, and the high God devise
> New things, and old things wane before his eyes
> Who wields and wrecks them, being more strong than they --
> But, having made me, me he shall not slay. (I, 65)

Not only will she achieve the pagan promise of rest beneath the "insuperable sea" (I, 66)[165]; she will also achieve her own immortality through her own word. Her poetry will be forever part of man's memory, will be felt in the forces of nature, heard in the voice of the nightingale:

> Men shall not see bright fire nor hear the sea,
> Nor mix their hearts with music, nor behold
> Cast forth of heaven, with feet of awful gold
> And plumeless wings that make the bright air blind,
> Lightning, with thunder for a hound behind
> Hunting through fields unfurrowed and unsown,
> But in the light and laughter, in the moan
> And music, and in grasp of lip and hand
> And shudder of water that makes felt on land
> The immeasurable tremor of all the sea,
> Memories shall mix and metaphors of me.
> Like me shall be the shuddering calm of night,
> When all the winds of the world for pure delight
> Close lips that quiver and fold up wings that ache;
> When nightingales are louder for love's sake,
> And leaves tremble like lute-strings or like fire[.]
> (I, 63-64)

Sappho's attitude in both sections of the poem, then, falls just short of true prophecy, primarily because she does not entirely recognize the divinity of Hertha and Apollo.

"On the Cliffs," written some fifteen years after "Anactoria," concentrates on the points of contact between Swinburne and Sappho; however, it also indirectly presents the subtle differences between them. The poem opens in a fashion similar to "On the Downs" and other "nature poems" in which the speaker stands on the barren shore beside the sea and awaits the renovating "word." But here the word Swinburne awaits is not that of earth or of Apollo but, as in "In the Bay," the Apollonian poet whose presence is particularly felt in the scene before him. As Raymond suggests, "Swinburne's cliffs . . . are located simultaneously in three regions: at Leucadia, by the North Sea, and in an unfulfilled subjectivity requiring release."[166] The poem first establishes Sappho's place in the eternal realm of Apollo, and in the process of invoking the first singer also presents the process by which the first word arose from the darkness of Night, the Mother.[167] It then moves on to the reasons that Sappho should hear and respond to this latest singer, Swinburne himself. He has keenly felt with "spirit of sense" the force of her song, has "known thee always who thou art," and has heard her voice in the note of the nightingale (III, 318-319). Most importantly, he holds himself "in spirit of thy sweet kin /In heart and spirit of song" (III, 319). Like Sappho, he has known the barrenness and bitterness of life:

> In fruitless years of youth dead long ago
> And deep beneath their own dead leaves and snow
> Buried, I heard with bitter heart and sere
> The same sea's word unchangeable, nor knew
> But that mine own life-days were changeless too
> And sharp and salt with unshed tear on tear
> And cold and fierce and barren; and my soul,
> Sickening, swam weakly with bated breath
> In a deep sea like death,
> And felt the wind buffet her face with brine
> Hard, and harsh thought on thought in long bleak roll
> Blown by keen gusts of memory sad as thine
> Heap the weight up of pain, and break, and leave
> Strength scarce enough to grieve
> In the sick heavy spirit, unmanned with strife
> Of waves that beat at the tired lips of life. (III, 313-314)[168]

Yet he, again like Sappho, did not take false comfort in those diversions that "stay the secret soul with sleep" (III, 314).[169] Instead, his "heart" continued to "burn" and seek, and he retained that "memory" (the "secret soul" or "spirit of sense") which took him out of the realm of individual diversions and concerns and into the heart of life and art:

> we retain
> A memory mastering pleasure and all pain,
> A spirit within the sense of ear and eye,

A soul behind the soul, that seeks and sings
And makes our life move only with its wings
And feed but from its lips, that in return
Feed of our hearts wherein the old fires that burn
Have strength not to consume
Nor glory enough to exalt us past our doom. (III, 315)

This "doom" may be considered both the pain of existence and the singer's mortality as a separate and self-conscious manifestation of life -- something that Cassandra, who tried to achieve a kind of conscious immortality, was unable to accept (III, 316). From this consideration of the fact that neither he nor Sappho was diverted by "such gifts" as bring "comfort" and "sleep" (III, 314-315) and that both are mortal as individual singers but immortal as part of the realm of song, Swinburne is led to consider the final end of Sappho, the woman, and the fact that she did attempt in a sense to win the gift of sleep from the sea:

the sea that once, being woman crowned
And girt with fire and glory of anguish round,
Thou wert so fain to seek to, fain to crave
If she would hear thee and save
And give thee comfort of thy great green grave[.] (III, 318)

And:

the sea
That sings and breathes in strange men's ears of thee
How in her barren bride-bed, void and vast,
Even thy soul sang itself to sleep at last. (III, 320)

However, her last song is not the song which Swinburne hears here by the northern sea:

The last that panted through her lips and died
Not down this grey north sea's half sapped cliff-side
That crumbles toward the coastline, year by year
More near the sands and near;
The last loud lyric fiery cry she cried,
Heard once on heights Leucadian, -- heard not here.
(III, 321)

Instead, that song which "fires our northland night" is "her song of life" (III, 321).

In the last part of the poem, Swinburne makes a subtle distinction between his song and that of Sappho. Although, as he also suggests in "The Nightingale," Sappho is capable of the song which celebrates life, in which "pain makes peace with pleasure" (III, 325), he cannot be certain that she won through to the joyful acceptance of life that Thalassius attained. The distinction works here in terms of the contrast between the desire to drown which lingers about Sappho's leap from the cliffs and the joy of the swimmer who "strikes out from the shore," between the symbol of the nightingale and that of the seamew. At the end of "On the Cliffs," the central and personal symbols of the swimmer and seamew are reasserted. Swinburne suggests here that the seamew knows nothing of song until his awareness incorporates the tragic knowledge of the nightingale; yet, as is indicated by the symbol of the energetic swim, he is able to accept that knowledge in a wholly positive fashion.[170]

"On the Cliffs" has often been compared to "Thalassius," and both are, indeed, deeply personal poems. "Thalassius," however, begins with the optimistic and general human values which Swinburne inherited from his reading of the Romantics and which, as we have seen in our analysis of the poem, were modified by his own direct experience of the world. And "On the Cliffs" begins with his own awareness of the barrenness and sorrow of existence which was reinforced by his reading of the personal lyrics of such poets as Sappho; it moves -- although less directly than in "Thalassius," as this is not the primary purpose of the poem -- to the same kind of qualified joy that Thalassius achieves. We have shown that the same essential distinctions can be made in terms of Swinburne's works generally: Songs before Sunrise, closest in spirit to that of the foster-father of "Thalassius," is actually less optimistic than he is; and Poems and Ballads, closest in spirit to Sappho, is actually less pessimistic than she is. Swinburne's poetry is, in general, marked by that quality of "tragic joy" which he praised in other poets (and did find in some of Sappho's works). The individual's achievement of tragic joy is first presented in "Hesperia," and the basis for it is established in "Hertha."

Chapter VIII: CONCLUSION

Swinburne died in April of 1909 after a brief illness, and he died with Rossetti's drawing of the Sphinx beside him. Rossetti's "The Question" depicts a young man who gazes into the mysterious eyes of the Sphinx, and an old man leaning on a staff who approaches to ask her the ultimate question, "Whither?"[1] It may be suggested that the drawing is symbolic of the central concerns of Swinburne's works -- of Hertha and of the man who waits to hear "the secret word our Mother saith /In silence."[2] To Swinburne, the word of Hertha, like that of the Sphinx, is of man and is enunciated by man. It may also be suggested that Rossetti's drawing represents Swinburne's concern, particularly in his later years, with the question of what awaits man after death.[3] Although he maintained that absolute knowledge of what lies beyond the grave is not available to man, his own belief was in accordance with the pagan conception of a restful oblivion and the pantheistic idea of a return to the forces of nature. The only individual immortality he envisioned was that which was secured through man's deed and word. As such, Swinburne's works have secured his immortality.

The Sphinx could also represent the difficulties encountered by the critic who attempts to solve the riddle of the figure of the woman in Swinburne's own works. It has not been possible simply to divide Swinburne's women into three or four basic types, as Sonstroem was able to do with Rossetti's women -- the heavenly lady, the fallen or victimized woman, and the femme fatale.[4] Nor has it been possible, it may be added, to link with any definiteness the women of Swinburne's works with the women of his life, as Sonstroem was able to do with the women of Rossetti's life -- Elizabeth Siddal, Fanny Cornforth, and Jane Burden Morris. Part of the difficulty in dealing with Swinburne's women-figures arises from the fact that he explores in his works the dualistic attitudes which lead to the division of the woman-symbol into the two basic types, the heavenly lady and the _femme fatale_, which he (and Sonstroem) found in Rossetti's works and which was present in the works of other writers of the period. As a result, the forms of Hertha -- her heavenly, earthly, and underworld aspects -- have both a negative and a positive side to them.

The negative view of the forms of Hertha is particularly explored in his early dramatic works, in _Atalanta in Calydon_ and the dramatic monologues of _Poems and Ballads_. Seen from the negative perspective, Swinburne's central women figures include, first of all, the heavenly maiden: Artemis or, in Christian terms, Mary, both of whom are associated with the transcendent impulse.[5] Secondly, we have the two figures who predominate in _Poems and Ballads_ and who may generally be related to an incomplete reaction against the dualism which is associated with the transcendent impulse: the cruel Venus (and her successive incarnations), who represents the guilty attachment to the body or the deliberate celebration of evil; and Proserpine, who represents the desire for immediate release from the world of change and pain.[6] Through these interrelated woman-symbols,[7] Swinburne explores the results of a direct or indirect belief in any dualistic system, particularly that of Christianity, and the general inability to accept the full nature of existence. All of these symbolic women are, accordingly, associated by Swinburne with barrenness and with death.

Behind such negation, then, may be seen Swinburne's own, more positive view of life, and this view is directly presented in Songs before Sunrise, particularly through the all-inclusive symbol of Hertha, the Great Goddess and the World Tree. Swinburne's own view includes not only the profound hatred of the transcendent Godhead which is voiced by Sappho, the speaker of "Anactoria" of Poems and Ballads, or by the Chorus of Atalanta, but also the complete denial of his power and the replacement of the false God with the truth of Hertha. As the later volume indicates (particularly by its use of light and dark imagery), Swinburne does not ignore "the mystery of the cruelty of things."[8] He accepts the "divine contraries" of life, both the destructive and the creative aspects of Hertha, and proclaims that man, Hertha's highest power, is the true divinity, one which is of both body and soul, and that he has creative freedom within the inevitable working of "things." From Swinburne's own perspective, Venus and Proserpine together may be seen to symbolize the truths of Hertha -- to be the womb and tomb of nature, its central peace and endless agitation. In the "nature poems" that present the individual's encounter with Hertha's forces, the two goddesses may be linked with the moment of death-like "indeterminacy" and renewal, and the participation in the world of fluxing forms -- with the symbolic dive and the swim of such poems as "The Lake of Gaube." Here, however, the goddesses merge into Hesperia, their "daughter," the symbol in Poems and Ballads of the individual man's reintegration with the forces without and within. Hesperia may be seen as the heavenly or ideal maiden who is not divorced from the truths of this world and who is achieved by those who have accepted the full nature of life and know that "heaven is about [them] here."[9] Similarly, the resurrection of the feminine spirits of whole nations may be seen as the collective acceptance of the truths of Hertha.[10]

An additional difficulty in dealing with Swinburne's image of the woman arises from the fact that the goddesses who represent these interrelated aspects of Hertha are not directly employed in the later "nature poems" or in "Tristram of Lyonesse" to present the individual's encounter with the forces of nature and to convey Swinburne's own sense of life. Although the sexual metaphor is still prevalent, Swinburne presents the individual's direct communion with the actual forces of sun, wind, and sea, a communion which is both actual and symbolic. The sea is both itself and a symbol of the Mother, just as the sun is both itself and, often, an image of her son, the divine light of man. In those poems which present the interrelated process in which the individual man re-enacts the original creation of light from the darkness, Swinburne employs the figure of Apollo to symbolize the divine light of man. Apollo is, however, related to Hesperia, although he has more general and more specific functions as well. Apollo is the same force as the sun-god Freedom in Songs before Sunrise (and, as such, is the force which arises in the female spirits of individual nations); he is also the same force as the sun-god Love in the "Prelude" to "Tristram of Lyonesse" (and, as such, is identical with Hertha). In poems like "Pan and Thalassius" he represents in a more specific fashion the "word" of man, and in this context he is juxtaposed to Pan, the symbol of the forces of nature exclusive of man's creativity. Together, however, they are equivalent to Hertha and are equally opposed to those masculine sky-gods who deny her truths. Pan alone, it may be added, is also occasionally identical with Hertha, as he is in "A Nympholept," in which the individual's encounter with the full nature of existence is presented through the figure of the Hesperia-like nymph. Apollo also specifically represents the realm of "song," the realm of those poets who have achieved perfect "harmony" in art or, even more specifically, of those "prophetic" poets who have comprehended the significance of both Pan and Apollo. Swinburne, however, tends to include as prophets, as "stars" in the darkness, those poets who occasionally manifested his own sense of "tragic joy" or at least recognized the sorrow and pain that he considered to be an inevitable part of life. This tendency is apparent in his treatment of Sappho.

As suggested in Chapter I, the image of the *femme fatale* is particularly linked with Swinburne's sense of life not only by many critics but also by many subsequent poets. Such poets as Wilde, Johnson, and Symons also tended to identify their own sense of life with the deliberate (but still guilty) celebration of evil or with the desire for final escape from the pains of life which is expressed by the speakers of the poems central to *Poems and Ballads*, and therefore to consider themselves at one with Swinburne.[11] In general, the attitudes expressed in the Venus and Proserpine poems may be linked with some of the central impulses of the "decadent" period: with being dedicated to the "dark angel" who "burn[s] with flames of evil ecstasy"[12] or with being "tire[d] of all but swift oblivion."[13] Swinburne, however, actually presents through the symbol of the woman an analysis of the causes and results of such impulses, and would not have been surprised when some of these poets returned to Rome or resorted to suicide.

Swinburne himself tried to avoid despair without returning to the "old solutions" which he considered neither possible nor ultimately beneficial to man. In his excellent study, Journey Through Despair, John Lester attempts to come to terms with the various and complicated "responses" to despair which were assumed during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. It may be suggested that a central solution associated with "decadence" is the fundamental acceptance of subjectivity. Tennyson, as we have seen in Chapter I, considered the impulse toward the sensuous and the purely aesthetic only as a tempting escape. Arnold, it may be added, also felt the temptation:

> People do not understand what a temptation there is, if you cannot bear anything not very good, to transfer your operations to a region where form is everything. Perfection of a certain kind may there be attained, or at least approached, without knocking yourself to pieces, but to attain or approach perfection in the region of thought and feeling, and to unite this with perfection of form . . . [is to] tear oneself to pieces.[14]

The problem is, however, larger than the "perfection of form," or than the lure of "sensuous art" which Ryals suggested was the dilemma of Tennyson's early poetry and which Buchanan condemned Rossetti for pursuing. The problem concerns not only the type of art but the source of inspiration or imagination itself (as was indicated in Chapter I in regard to both Tennyson and Keats). Behind the "retreat" of the later poets into personal intensity, ironic detachment, or the palace of art (the formal construct or the esoteric symbol) may be seen the tacit or direct assumption that value is instrumental rather than constitutive, to use Morse Peckham's terms.[15]

The movement towards an acceptance of subjectivism and the placement of all value in that which man creates and controls -- the world of art -- may be seen in Rossetti. He begins with the Romantic concern with establishing the infinite in the finite, the ideal in the real, and uses the figure of the woman to image this connection, drawing his symbol from the Romantics and from Dante and the stil novisti poets.[16] He was, however, unable to achieve this synthesis, and his image of the woman tends therefore to break down into the opposites of "sense" and "soul," the earthly and the heavenly.[17] In a rather negative estimate of Rossetti's poetry, Harold Weatherby suggests that "Rossetti . . . tried to make poetic use of the supernatural and the spiritual without ever believing in it," and that he "attempt[ed] to give sensuous form to a mystical reality in order to avoid total commitment to romantic subjectivism which we may suggest, at the risk of specious generalization, was what all of the formalistic tendencies of Pre-Raphaelite art are aimed at."[18] Weatherby denies Rossetti's struggle to maintain a vital (or a transcendent) idealism, but he does point to the direction which Rossetti's art takes. It may be said, with some qualifications, that Rossetti reluctantly accepts the isolating subjectivism which Pater so aptly described in his "Conclusion" to The Renaissance:

> Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced . . . . Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.[19]

Rossetti's attempt is to capture those "moments as they pass" and fix them in art, which he himself called a "moment's monument."[20] In Rossetti, art is beginning to become the "Tower of Ivory, House of

Gold."

Although some of Swinburne's poems, such as those concerning Apollo, have led some critics to maintain that he participated in the same movement,[21] Swinburne's realm of art is attached to the realm of nature and to the deepest regions of man's mind. Of those resolutions which Lester outlines in his Journey Through Despair, Swinburne's own solution is much like that of those later poets who not only advocated heroic endurance but actively plunged into nature, "even . . . Darwin's nature." As Lester points out,

> To reach out with acceptance to the natural world was not only to reach downward, but also to become reunited with a world of age-long duration, through which man was linked with all history, with pagan worship and myth, even with prehistory.

He concludes that

> Through a rooting of symbol in that deep substratum of inherited unconscious experience variously labeled "the Great Mind of the Universe," the "Great Memory," the "infallible church of poetic tradition," . . . such authors were able to escape the threatening solipsism of late-century aesthetics, in which . . . each sensibility was alone, each mind kept "as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."[22]

Swinburne's conception of Apollo has at least the germ of this later resolution.

It may finally be suggested that Swinburne's influence on the later poets of the nineteenth century should also be reexamined now that a reevaluation of his poetic thought and method is under way. Praz's study of Swinburne's influence on the femmes fatales of later nineteenth century writers should be supplemented with a study of his influence on such "counter-decadents" as W.E. Henley and John Davidson, for their view of life is in some respects closer to Swinburne's own, as it is conveyed through the forms of Hertha. Swinburne's attempt to present the truths of nature in a positive fashion without resorting to the false optimism he associated with much of Romantic and early Victorian thought and without falling into the despair or subjectivism which is present in much of the poetry of the later century makes him an important figure in the history of ideas in the nineteenth century.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

[1] A. Austin, "The Poetry of the Period. Mr. Swinburne," *Temple Bar* 26 (1869), 465, 468 and 469. Swinburne, of course, replies to Austin (and to Buchanan) in *Under the Microscope* (1872).

[2] "Dedication," *Poems and Ballads*, in *The Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne* (London, 1904; reprinted in New York, 1972), I, 294.

[3] "Thalassius," *Poems*, III, 307.

[4] *Notes on Poems and Reviews*, in the Bonchurch Edition of *The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, ed. Edmund Gosse and T.J. Wise (New York, 1925-1927), XVI, 361.

[5] "Dolores," *Poems*, I, 154 and 155.

[6] "Mater Dolorosa," *Poems*, II, 142.

[7] "The Litany of Nations," *Poems*, II, 66.

[8] "Hertha," *Poems*, II, 72.

[9] "Tristram of Lyonesse," canto VIII, *Poems*, IV, 127.

[10] Georges Lafourcade, *La Jeunesse de Swinburne* (Paris and London, 1928), II, 119. He quotes fragments of this play on pages 114-120 and 188.

[11] Ibid., 119. In the second quotation, lines from page 188 have also been incorporated.

[12] See Ibid., 124-128 for fragments of this unfinished play. The play was, Swinburne comments, inspired by that of the same name attributed to Tourneur. See *The Swinburne Letters*, ed. Cecil Lang (New Haven, 1959-1962), II, 342-343.

[13] Lafourcade, *La Jeunesse*, II, 132.

[14] See Ibid., 133-134 and 206-207 and (for instance) Humphrey Hare, *Swinburne: A Biographical Approach* (London, 1949), 48-50.

[15] *Rosamond*, Act I, *The Tragedies of Algernon Charles Swinburne* (London, 1905-1907), I, 238-239.

[16] *The Queen-Mother*, II, i, *Tragedies*, I, 51.

[17] *Chastelard*, V, i, *Tragedies*, II, 128. See also I, ii, Ibid., 25, where she is indirectly compared to a "Venus crowned, that eats the hearts of men."

[18] *Atalanta in Calydon*, *Poems*, IV, 273 and 307. John D. Rosenberg, comparing *Chastelard* and *Atalanta*, calls Atalanta "a *frigid* Venus who destroys her lover Meleager as mercilessly as Aphrodite destroys Hippolytus." "Swinburne," *Victorian Studies*, 11 (1967), 139 (emphasis his).

[19] *Rosamond*, I, *Tragedies*, I, 236.

[20] Ibid., V, *Tragedies*, I, 278.

[21] Ibid., 279.

[22] *The Queen-Mother*, IV, ii, *Tragedies*, I, 149. See also V, ii, Ibid., 187.

[23] As she says to herself,

> I did think
> My time was gone when men would dance to death
> As to music, and lie laughing down
> In the grave and take their funerals for their feasts,
> To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet,
> Though I lack power on men that lack men's blood.
> (*Chastelard*, IV, i, *Tragedies*, II, 115)

Compare Rosamond:

> I whose curled hair was as a strong staked net
> To take the hunters and the hunt, and bind
> Faces and feet and hands; a golden gin
> Wherein the tawny-lidded lions fell,
> Broken at ankle . . . .
> (*Rosamond*, I, *Tragedies*, I, 234)

[24] *Atalanta in Calydon*, *Poems*, IV, 282.

[25] See *Letters*, I, 38-39.

[26] See Lafourcade, *La Jeunesse*, II, 73, for the list, probably written in 1861.

[27] "Dead Love" was first published in 1862 in *Once a Week*, and all of the stories except the last are included in *Complete Works*, XVII. The unfinished *Lucretia Borgia: The Chronicle of Tebaldeo Tebaldei* was published by Randolph Hughes in 1942 (London: Golden Cockerell Press).

[28] *A Year's Letters* was first published pseudonomously in 1877 in serialized form in the *Tatler*. The latest edition is that of Francis Jacques Sypher (New York, 1974). *Lesbia Brandon* was not published until 1952 (New York: British Book Center) by R. Hughes.

[29] A Year's Letters, ed. Sypher, 57.

[30] Ibid., 59.

[31] See Letters, VI, 195. Redgie Clavering of the play The Sisters (1892) is also considered to be a portrait of Swinburne.

[32] Lesbia Brandon, ed. Hughes, 89.

[33] Ibid., 100.

[34] A Year's Letters, ed. Sypher, 130-131.

[35] Lesbia Brandon, ed. Hughes, 81-82. It should be noted here that Swinburne's manuscript was left untitled, and that others have suggested it has been misnamed, as Margaret is more central to the book.

[36] Philip Henderson, Swinburne: The Portrait of a Poet (London, 1974), 96.

[37] Both were collected in Essays and Studies (1875) and are reprinted in Complete Works, XV.

[38] Complete Works, XV, 160-161, 192, 156-157, and 179.

[39] Ibid., 211, 212, and 213. Here he also praises Sandys' Medea and mentions his Cleopatra (which inspired Swinburne's own poem on her).

[40] The Age of Shakespeare, Complete Works, XI, 380.

[41] "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Complete Works, XV, 7-8. See also page 13.

[42] Letters, II, 101.

[43] Quoted by Edward Thomas, Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study (London, 1912), 11-12.

[44] Morley's review is included in Clyde K. Hyder's collection, Swinburne: The Critical Heritage (New York, 1970), 23.

[45] B. C[roce], La Critica, 29 (1931), 133-134. This review was translated for me by Dr. J. Algeo, The Department of Romance Languages, The University of Alberta.

[46] In his excellent collection of critical documents, The Romantic Movement (London, 1966), 42, Anthony Thorlby makes this suggestion -- and adds himself that Praz is "disappointingly void of any theoretical understanding."

[47] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. Angus Davidson (London, 1933), xi. He suggests both that this has already been done and that it is of little use, since the "[e]ducation of sensibility [comes]

about through works of art . . . [and] through a particular chain of literary influences" (xii).

[48] Ibid., xiv.

[49] Ibid., 237. In the last phrase, Praz is, of course, quoting Swinburne himself.

[50] This review is quoted (with others such as Edmund Wilson's) in Albert Fowler's "Sensibility Since Sade," Southwestern Review, 45 (1960), 248. Fowler's article is primarily a defence of Praz.

[51] See Amaury de Riencourt, "Before History: The Eternal Feminine," Sex and Power in History, (New York, 1974), 3-60. Also see such sources as: Robert Briffault, The Mothers, 3 vols. (New York, 1927); E.O. James, The Cult of the Mother Goddess (London, 1959); Erich Neumann, The Great Mother (London, 1965); and Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods (1901; reprinted, Chicago, 1969).

[52] Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Creative Mythology (New York, 1968), 204. Campbell also notes her underground survival in such forms as the cult of Isis and the Eleusinian mysteries, in which the central rite was the "sacred marriage" of the soul with the chthonic goddess.

[53] René Wellek, "Romanticism Re-examined," in Romanticism Reconsidered, ed. Northrop Frye (New York and London, 1963), 129-130. Wellek reiterates this stand in Confrontations (Princeton, New Jersey, 1965), 4. See also Albert Gérard, "On the Logic of Romanticism," Essays in Criticism, 7 (1957), 262-273; and Earl Wasserman, "The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge," Studies in Romanticism, 4 (1964), 17-34. It should be noted that Morse Peckham is Wellek's major opponent. According to Peckham, what is truly Romantic (although not fully achieved until Nietzsche) is the perception that the mind creates order, that value is not constitutive but instrumental. See, for instance, Beyond the Tragic Vision (New York, 1962).

[54] Schelling, "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," included as an "Appendix" to Herbert Read's The True Voice of Feeling (London, 1953), 347.

[55] The Prelude, Book XIV, ll. 206-209.

[56] On Love, Shelley's Prose, ed. David Lee Clark (Albuquerque, 1954), 170.

[57] Defence of Poetry, Ibid., 282-283.

[58] See Derek Stanford, "Coleridge as Poet and Philosopher of Love," English, 13 (1960), 3-7; and L.E. Vaughan, "Love and the Imagination in the Philosophy and Poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," M.A. Thesis, The University of Alberta, 1971.

[59] Quoted by Thomas M. Raysor, "Coleridge and 'Asra,'" *Studies in Philology*, 26 (1929), 319. See also George Whalley, *Coleridge and Sara Hutchinson and the Asra Poems* (Toronto, 1955).

[60] In *Mysticism* (London, 1930), E. Underhill indicates that it is one of the three traditional metaphors for union with God.

[61] There can be little doubt of the transcendent implications of the mystical tradition, but the direction of courtly love has been much debated, at least in terms of its early developments of southern France in the late eleventh century -- the first "revenge" of the Great Mother, as Leslie Fiedler says in *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York, 1966), 29. All the critics agree that Provençal poetry elevated the love of woman to a height unprecedented in classical literature and unsanctioned in Christian tradition, and probably also unwarranted by the specific situation in feudal France. And they also agree on the general characteristics of that love: it was always outside marriage and for a woman of great beauty, refinement, and station; it was always characterized by humility and suffering on the part of the lowly lover, who begged for his mistress's "merci"; and it was in some fashion ultimately ennobling. The problem is, however, with the symbolic value of that love and the woman. In some troubadour lyrics (those of Geoffrey Rudel, for instance) the woman seems but a metaphor for a higher spiritual goal, while in others (like those of Guillaume II) she seems the ideal in the flesh and is celebrated in explicitly sensual terms. This ambiguity, often quite deliberate on the part of the poets, accounts for the debate over the origins of the religion of love, some critics giving it other-worldly significance and some maintaining it was of this earth. To be more specific, C.S. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936) proclaims that it was a result of the conditions of the time, was influenced by the worldly Ovid and was at first but a parody of real religion; Denis de Rougemont in *Love in the Western World* (New York, 1956) that it was from the beginning otherworldly and originated in the Catharist heresy; Alexander J. Denomy in *The Heresy of Courtly Love* (New York, 1947), that it was imported from Moslem Spain and was characterized by the ultimate other-worldliness of Arab love poetry; and James J. Wilhelm in *The Cruelest Month* (New Haven and London, 1965), that it was a secularization of the medieval Latin religious lyric. It is my contention that critics like de Rougemont who equate the origins of courtly love with other-worldly doctrines are in error: the woman in early courtly love poetry is a real woman of the increasingly worldly and cultured courts who is celebrated sensually (and sometimes possessed) and worshipped in the language of the Church; and it is only later that she is definitely converted into an heavenly image and her cult reconciled with that of the Virgin Mary. The final phase of this spiritualizing process may be seen in the *dolce stil novisti* poets and Dante. As Valency suggests in *In Praise of Love* (New York, 1961), in Dante's *Vita Nuova*, *Convivio* and *Divine Comedy* we may particularly see the process whereby erotic love is purified through the virtue of the fair lady, intellectualized, and finally spiritualized to the point that the real woman is entirely left behind and replaced by God himself.

[62] M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York, 1971), 31. See also Northrop Frye, "The Romantic Myth," *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York, 1968). To my knowledge, no full-scale analysis of the connection between love and the imagination and of the symbol of the woman has yet been attempted. Frederick L. Beaty's *Light from Heaven: Love in British Romantic Poetry* (DeKalb, Illinois, 1971) is, for example, somewhat limited in its scope.

[63] Quoted by Abrams, 195.

[64] Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism*, especially 33-35. Here we are speaking specifically of English Romanticism. Wellek's reminder of the darker aspects of German Romanticism should, however, be quoted here:

> the attitude, the "vision" of the German Romantics -- their feeling for the uncanny, the menace, the sense of evil lurking behind the façade of the world . . . is not Rousseauistic: it lacks the trust in goodness, the trust in God and Providence, or the belief in progress which inspires Wordsworth and Coleridge, and in a secular form, Shelley, or, in a Messianic prophetic version, Blake (who must not be interpreted as a Satanist or a forerunner of Nietzsche). In the best things of Tieck, Arnim and Hoffmann a sense of the double bottom of the world is conveyed -- a fear that man is exposed helplessly to sinister forces, to fate, to chance, to the darkness of an incomprehensible mystery. (*Confrontations*, 19-20)

Wellek goes on to discuss Romantic irony and the grotesque. Gérard maintains, however, that the English Romantics did not ignore the darker aspects of existence, but were able to move on to a positive synthesis -- often, I would add, by turning to a transcendent source. (See below.)

[65] Frye, "The Drunken Boat," *Romanticism Reconsidered*, 21. Here, of course, Frye is less specific about the implications of female "types" than in the discussion to follow.

[66] Peckham, "The Dilemma of a Century: The Four Stages of Romanticism, in *Romanticism: The Culture of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Peckham (New York, 1965), 15-33.

[67] Albert S. Gérard, *English Romantic Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), 120 and 200. This book is an excellent study of the "problem of evil" in English Romanticism. Coleridge's difficulty with coming to terms with evil may be seen in his "Christabel" -- and in his eventual turning to panentheism, then to orthodox Christianity.

[68] Thorlby, *The Romantic Movement*, 4.

[69] Joseph Warren Beach, *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry* (New York, 1936), 219 and David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 106.

[70] *Epipsychidion*, l. 284, *Shelley: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1967), 418. It should be noted here that Beach

does agree with this interpretation, 210; but Perkins, 119, reads this as an indication of Shelley's apprehension of the meaningless cyclical repetitions of life on this earth.

[71] Shelley's Prose, ed. Clark, 6 and 8 (emphasis his).

[72] Queen Mab, VI, ll. 42-43, Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 784.

[73] James A. Notopoulos, The Platonism of Shelley (1949; reprinted New York, 1969).

[74] See, in particular, "Mont Blanc," ll. 96-97 and 127, ed. Hutchinson, 534.

[75] Adonais, XXXVIII, l. 339, ed. Hutchinson, 400.

[76] "Mont Blanc," l. 17, ed. Hutchinson, 532.

[77] "Mont Blanc," ll. 39-40, 4, and 44, ed. Hutchinson, 533, 532, and 533.

[78] Cudworth, True Intellectual System (New York, 1837), II, 445.

[79] Harold Bloom, Shelley's Mythmaking (New Haven, 1959), 35. My reading of these last lines follows his.

[80] See Perkins, 126.

[81] See particularly ll. 48-49 and 67-70, Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 531. There are echoes of Coleridge's poem throughout the "Hymn." And there is the same apprehension of the dark colour which life, internal and external, takes on when the "genial spirits fail."

[82] This is noted also by Earl R. Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading (Baltimore and London, 1971), 206. The emphasis is my own.

[83] Shelley's Prose, ed. Clark, 283, 295, and 297.

[84] Quoted by Wasserman, 206-207.

[85] Defence of Poetry, Shelley's Prose, ed. Clark, 295.

[86] Symposium, 197e; Neville Rogers, Shelley at Work (Oxford, 1956), 73.

[87] Epipsychidion, ll. 457-460, Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 421.

[88] Ibid., ll. 474-479, ed. Hutchinson, 42.

[89] Ibid., l. 116 and ll. 570-571, ed. Hutchinson, 414 and 423.

[90] See Carl Grabo, Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation (Chapel Hill, 1935), 52.

[91] *Adonais*, XXXVIII, ll. 338-340, *Poetical Works*, ed. Hutchinson, 440. It should also be noted that Shelley recognized the same tendency in a letter of 1821: "The *Adonais*, in spite of its mysticism, is the least imperfect of my compositions."

[92] "Preface" to "Alastor," *Shelley's Prose*, ed. Clark, 314. Those critics are right, of course, who see the poem as a warning against isolating solipsism. See Albert Gérard, *English Romantic Poetry*, who also compares this tendency in Shelley to a stronger one in German poetry.

[93] Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," plates 22-24, *Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1966), 158.

[94] *Jerusalem*, plate 69, l. 25, and plate 71, ll. 17-19, ed. Keynes, 706 and 709.

[95] "The Ghost of Abel," plate 1, ed. Keynes, 779.

[96] Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton, 1947), 126.

[97] *Jerusalem*, plate 32, l. 49, ed. Keynes, 660.

[98] Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse* (Garden City, New York, 1963), 418.

[99] *Jerusalem*, plate 54, ll. 1-4, ed. Keynes, 684.

[100] Several specific qualifications should be made to this identification of Enitharmon. First of all, she is actually space or the cosmos to Vala's nature; secondly, she is actually, and logically, the emanation of Los. Yet, she does ally herself with Urizen, the tyrannical God of man's own making; and, as Frye suggests, *Fearful Symmetry*, 262, "to an Enitharmon mind, a 'spirit' is a mysterious external power, that is, a god. And as all worship of external powers is suggested by the remoteness of nature which is most obvious in the sky, all such idolatry is fundamentally star worship . . . ." Thus, this general identification of Enitharmon is essentially correct.

[101] Schelling, quoted by Edward Caird, "Goethe and Philosophy," *Essays on Literature and Philosophy* (New York, 1892), I, 85.

[102] Quoted by Roy Pascal, *The German Sturm und Drang* (Manchester, 1953), 213.

[103] See Edwin H. Zeydel, *Goethe the Lyrist* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1955).

[104] John Middleton Murry, *Heaven -- And Earth* (London, 1938), 249.

[105] Also quoted by Beach, 277-278.

[106] Quoted by E.M. Butler, *Byron and Goethe* (London, 1956), 214.

[107] See, for instance, his remarks on Pan, the representative of "intelligence blended with a darker power, deeper, mightier, and more universal than the conscious intellect of man . . . ." Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London, 1965), II, 93.

[108] As I intend to argue elsewhere, it was Coleridge's intention to ultimately connect his Geraldine with the powers of the "upper sky" and to present her influence as beneficial -- as is suggested by the tradition of the lamia itself. However, he abandoned the poem when the Dionysiac elements -- the ambiguous energies of the daemonic or the "praeternatural" -- were in ascendancy and was unable to write of the synthesis of the Dionysian and Apollonian elements in Christabel's mind. This inability is connected with Coleridge's eventual attempt to make Schelling's pantheism more panentheistic in the Biographia and with his eventual Christianizing of Plotinus in his later writings. Many of the Romantics moved in the same direction.

[109] Charles I. Patterson Jr., The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats (Urbana, 1970), especially 106. Patterson opposes the daemonic sphere of the imagination "Beyond its proper bounds" to the imagination as love and "negative capability." He also gives excellent readings of Endymion and "La Belle Dame."

[110] See Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (New York, 1968), 289, for an account of this paper and the shocked reaction of some of his fellow pro-Darwinians.

[111] Morse Peckham, "Darwinism and Darwinisticism" (1959), included in the collection, The Triumph of Romanticism (Columbia, South Carolina, 1970), 176-201.

[112] Quoted by Himmelfarb, 346. Peckham considers Himmelfarb herself to present "Darwinisticism" (193).

[113] Lancelot Law Whyte, The Unconscious before Freud (New York, 1960), 10 and 49 respectively.

[114] Ibid., 71 and following. It has already been suggested that for the Romantics the unconscious was linked with divine powers (whatever the source); it may also be mentioned here that the connection between nature and the unconscious is also investigated by such early "psychologists" as G.H. von Schubert, Kerner, and Carus. In such works as the Views of Dark Side of Natural Science (1808) Schubert, for example explores the "twilight realms of the unconscious," to use Coleridge's phrase. In all of these early "psychologists," however, the unconscious is still ultimately connected with the divine within.

[115] Frye, "The Drunken Boat," Romanticism Reconsidered, 22. See also Fables of Identity (New York, 1963), 227. Freud himself draws the same connections in On Creativity and the Unconscious (New York, 1958), 5-9.

[116] The numinous element returns to theories of the unconscious with Jung, who drew so many of his ideas from the Romantics and their sources. To some critics, Jung makes God the wholeness of the self, but, as Whyte suggests (255), wholeness is often considered by Jung to be the God within.

[117] *Past and Present*, *Thomas Carlyle's Works* (New York, 1900), X, 7.

[118] *French Revolution* (III, Book I, Chapter I), *Works*, IV, 2. Also quoted by Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 98.

[119] *Characteristics*, *Works*, XXVII, 3.

[120] *Sartor Resartus*, ed. Charles Frederick Harrold (New York, 1937), 260.

[121] Gaylord C. LeRoy, *Perplexed Prophets* (Philadelphia, 1953), 30 and Albert J. LaValley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern* (New Haven), 6 and 127-129.

[122] John Bayley, *The Romantic Survival* (London, 1957), 10. Frye, *A Study of Romanticism* (48) reminds us of the difficulty which the Romantics themselves had including the "social theme" with that of "individual enlightenment." And LeRoy, 176, suggests that the main Victorian problem was the social one: "Those . . . who were tortured by lack of faith . . . were men who could find no way to deal with the self-assertive forces in the personality or with the struggle for fulfillment in society, without the inner and outer restraints religion provided . . . ."

[123] *Sartor Resartus*, ed. Harrold, 132.

[124] Ibid., 133 and 141.

[125] Ibid., 138.

[126] Ibid., 143. Harrold's footnote suggests that love for her will be a "disclosure of the divine by means of Nature."

[127] She also literally cuts across his attempt to achieve solace in nature. At the moment at which he achieves a sense of "communion" with the divine "Mother," Blumine rides by in a carriage with Herr Towgood (151).

[128] Ibid., 132.

[129] Ibid., 133.

[130] Arnold, *Poetical Works*, ed. C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry (London, 1969), 181 (emphasis his).

[131] Ibid., 247 (emphasis mine).

[132] Ibid., 182.

[133] A. Dwight Culler, *Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold* (New Haven and London, 1966).

[134] Culler, 123, says she is the "goddess of the forest glade" and Lionel Trilling, *Matthew Arnold* (New York and London, 1958), 125, suggests she is a "symbol of [the] past" and the pagan world of joy.

[135] "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann,'" ed. Tinker and Lowry, 310. This poem is linked by Culler with the Marguerite poems and contains many of the same images.

[136] "Human Life," ed. Tinker and Lowry, 40.

[137] "Euphrosyne," ed. Tinker and Lowry, 203.

[138] "The Poet," l. 1 and l. 19, *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London and Harlow, 1969), 222.

[139] "The Poet's Mind," l. 9, ed. Ricks, 224.

[140] "The Mystic," l. 33, Ed. Ricks, 230.

[141] "The Dying Swan," ll. 21 and 42, ed. Ricks, 231 and 232.

[142] Lionel Stevenson, "The 'High-Born Maiden' Symbol in Tennyson," *PMLA*, 63 (1948), 234-243. The quotation in the title is from Shelley's "To a Skylark."

[143] Clyde de L. Ryals, "The 'Fatal Woman' Symbol in Tennyson," *PMLA*, 74 (1951), 438-443.

[144] "The Merman," ll. 8-16, *Poems*, ed. Ricks, 194.

[145] "The Mermaid," ll. 10, 22 and 28-30, ed. Ricks, 195-196. Also see "The Sea-Fairies."

[146] "Memory," l. 32, ed. Ricks, 264. Here the snake of the undersea world of "The Mermaid" and "The Kraken" is also present.

[147] "Sense and Conscience," ll. 66-69, ed. Ricks, 274. Ryals does quote these lines, but in a different context. "Recollections of Arabian Nights" is also related: the Persian woman at the center of the dream seems to stand for these same ambiguous energies of the mind.

[148] "The Palace of Art," l. 291, ed. Ricks, 418.

[149] The quotations are from Stevenson, 243. The "solution" is not so simple, however. It is my contention that it has less to do with a movement from subjective and sensuous lyricism to objective and public didacticism and more to do with the gradual reassertion of faith that the sources of inspiration are of the higher self, are

associated with the divine within all men, and with an exploration of the same questions in the "chameleon" fashion of objective poetry. "Ulysses," another poem associated with the conversion to social commitment is actually committed to following the "gleam." See Howard W. Fulweiler, "Tennyson and the 'Summons from the Sea,'" Victorian Poetry, 3 (1965), 25-44.

[150] Gerhard Joseph begins his excellent and thorough study of Tennysonian Love (Minneapolis, 1968) with this observation and suggests that the synthesis breaks down entirely in the Idylls of the King. See also Wendell Stacy Johnson, Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry (Ithaca and London, 1975) for a thorough treatment of love in Tennyson's poetry.

[151] The Victorian Poets: A Guide to Research, ed. Frederick E. Faverty (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 16. This statement is quoted by Ryals (443) who makes essentially the same point.

[152] [R. Buchanan], "The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr. D.G. Rossetti," Contemporary Review (1871), reprinted in volume 208 (1966), 308. Gerard Joseph also quotes this passage, 118.

[153] Maud, I, vi, ll. 212-219, ed. Ricks, 1053.

[154] See Maud, I, xviii, ll. 611-626, ed. Ricks, 1067-1068. Compare this passage with Rosamond, I, Tragedies, I, 238-239, quoted above.

[155] Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven, 1957), 13. The book is, of course, an excellent study of many of the questions only touched upon here.

[156] Beach, The Concept of Nature, 459.

[157] This is Nietzsche's phrase for Goethe, quoted by Erich Heller, The Disinherited Mind (London, 1971), 100.

[158] William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 269-270.

[159] Letters, II, 43 and 335.

[160] Swinburne uses the term before it was associated closely with Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, and in a more general sense.

[161] "Coleridge," Complete Works, XV, 151, note.

[162] "Notes on the Text of Shelley," Complete Works, XV, 374. Many of these observations are in footnotes because Swinburne insisted that a poet should be judged by his poetry not his philosophy.

[163] "Coleridge," Complete Works, XV, 151.

[164] See Letters, I, 115; and 297, where he quotes in German,

although he really does not know the language (see Letters, II, 182) Goethe's "The chief thing is to learn to govern oneself."

[165] For Swinburne's remarks on Goethe's opinion of Byron, see Letters, IV, 93, and Complete Works, XIV, 164; and on Hugo, see Letters, III, 326.

[166] See Letters, VI, 268.

[167] "Percy Bysshe Shelley," Complete Works, XV, 331. (See also Ibid., XIV, 195.) Here Swinburne seems to confuse Deism and Theism.

[168] Ibid.

[169] "Notes on the Text of Shelley," Complete Works, XV, 376.

[170] See William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 150-151, for instance.

[171] Letters, III, 14.

[172] "Wordsworth and Byron," Complete Works, XIV, 213.

[173] "Byron," Complete Works, XV, 126.

[174] See Complete Works, XIV, 219, for example.

[175] "Byron," Complete Works, XV, 126.

[176] Ibid. This is perhaps an allusion to Shelley's remark in Peter Bell:

> He touched the hem of Nature's shift,
> Fell faint -- and never dared uplift
> The closest, all-concealing tunic.

[177] Ibid., 126 and 127. Byron is, as we will see, not of equal rank with Shelley as a poet, however. Coleridge, it should be added, was an excellent poet according to Swinburne, even though he quarrelled with his "theosophy." He particularly admired "Christabel."

[178] Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 163.

[179] After reading Carlyle's Reminiscences, Swinburne wrote: "the two things this old man of genius, who hated almost everything and reviled almost everybody, hated and reviled above all others, were poetry and republicanism. I wish the prose royalists joy of their champion . . . ." Letters, IV, 208.

[180] "A Century of English Poetry," Complete Works, XIV, 142.

[181] "Charles Lamb and George Wither," Complete Works, XIV, 283. Here he is referring to Carlyle's statement that Sterling was striving "not to be a moonshine shadow of the first Paul."

[182] See Hyder, *Swinburne: The Critical Heritage*, 118. The only article on this subject, Wendell Stacy Johnson, "Swinburne and Carlyle," *ELN*, 1 (1963), 117-121, supposes Swinburne's hostile view to be a result of this revelation.

[183] *Studies in Prose and Poetry*, *Complete Works*, XV, 245.

[184] For a full account of their relationship, see Leonard M. Findlay, "Swinburne and Tennyson," *VP*, 9 (1972), 217-236.

[185] "Byron," *Complete Works*, XV, 120.

[186] "Tennyson and Musset," *Complete Works*, XIV, 328.

[187] *Letters*, II, 86.

[188] The echoes in "The Higher Pantheism" are from the Bible and Shelley.

[189] "Tennyson and Musset," *Complete Works*, XIV, 327.

[190] "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," *Complete Works*, XV, 22.

[191] "Tennyson and Musset," *Complete Works*, XIV, 303.

[192] "Wordsworth and Byron," *Complete Works*, XIV, 217.

[193] "Changes of Aspect," (about 1904-1906), *New Writings by Swinburne*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang (Syracuse, New York, 1964), 72.

[194] See Sidney M.B. Coulling, "Swinburne and Arnold," *PQ*, 49 (1970), 211-213.

[195] "Charles Dickens," *Complete Works*, XIV, 85.

[196] *Miscellanies*, *Complete Works*, XIV, 94.

[197] *Letters*, II, 241 (emphasis his). See also *Letters*, III, 14, where he compares his own earlier work to Arnold's book.

[198] *Letters*, II, 255.

[199] "Matthew Arnold's New Poems," *Complete Works*, XV, 66.

[200] Ibid., 71.

[201] Quoted by Swinburne, Ibid., 72 and 73.

[202] Ibid., 72.

[203] Ibid., 80-81.

[204] Ibid., 83 and 86.

[205] Ibid., 87.

[206] Arnold himself detected that Swinburne was the French critic. See Letters, I, 269-270.

[207] "Matthew Arnold's New Poems," Complete Works, XV, 68.

[208] Ibid., 68-69.

[209] Ibid., 66.

[210] "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Complete Works, XV, 22-23.

[211] Ibid., 23.

[212] Letters, II, 85; see also Letters, III, 15 and IV, 17.

Chapter II

[1] Tacitus, Dialogus Agricola and Germania, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Oxford, 1908), 113-114.

[2] Morley, as suggested above, accused Swinburne of pouring over the more purient passages in Lemprière like a schoolboy; and Swinburne himself mentions Smith's Dictionary several times in his letters.

[3] William Smith, ed. Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology (London, 1864-66), II, 439.

[4] Sartor Resartus, ed. Harrold, 282.

[5] "At Eleusis," Poems, I, 209.

[6] C.G. Jung and C. Kerényi, Introduction to a Science of Mythology, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London, 1951), 212 and 207.

[7] "At Eleusis," Poems, I, 209-210.

[8] "Hymn to Proserpine," Poems, I, 72 and 71.

[9] See "Plato; or the Philosopher," Representative Men, The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York, 1940), 471-498.

[10] Cudworth, True Intellectual System, I, 220.

[11] Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. Shawcross, I, 103.

[12] Quoted by Irving Lewis Horowitz, The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno (New York, 1952), 28-29.

[13] Quoted by Beach, The Concept of Nature, 278.

[14] "Genesis," Poems, II, 118; "Hertha," 1. 190, Poems, II, 79. All subsequent references to "Hertha" will be included in the text itself.

[15] "Prelude" to "Tristram of Lyonesse," Poems, IV, [5].

[16] Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (London, 1968), 85-86.

[17] "For the Feast of Giordano Bruno, Poems, III, 48; and "The Monument of Giordano Bruno," Poems, VI, 243.

[18] Cudworth quite vehemently opposes a pantheistic view of the World-Soul:

> Although acknowledging this plastic life of Nature the Cosmo-Plastic Atheists do mistake the notion of it, or pervert it, or abuse it, to make a certain spurious and counterfeiting God-almighty of it (or a first principle of things), thereby excluding perfect mind, or consciously understanding nature, presiding over the universe; they substituting this stupid plastic nature in the room of it. (True Intellectual System, II, 243)

[19] "Genesis," Poems, II, 117.

[20] Jerome J. McGann, Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism (Chicago and London, 1972), 193. Although McGann presents his book in the form of a debate amongst Swinburne critics, all of the opinions in his book will be attributed to him.

[21] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 94.

[22] "The Grand Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes," Poems, V, 43-44. In Orpheus and Greek Religion (London, 1935), 92 and following, W.K.C. Guthrie suggests that Aristophanes' account is a mixture of Hesiod and Orphic conceptions.

[23] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 93 and 94. (See McGann, 193.)

[24] Ibid., 94 and 93.

[25] Ibid., 104. (See McGann, 193, who also points out that this is an inversion of the Gloria of the Mass.)

[26] J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts, third ed. (London, 1874; reprinted, Amsterdam, 1967), V, 356, footnote 530. Muir also notes that Mr. Colebrooke and Professor Müller had already translated this work, so it is quite likely that Swinburne was acquainted with it. See also ll. 41-65 of "Hertha," where the same sort of questions are asked.

[27] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 95.

[28] Georg Roppen, Evolution and Poetic Belief (Oxford, 1956), 182. The interpretation of the poem given here, it should be mentioned, differs from Roppen's more "Platonic" and "providential" interpretation.

[29] Mallet, Northern Antiquities, trans. Bishop Percy (London, 1847; reprinted, New York, 1968), 97.

[30] See Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 54-55. He quotes but a few lines.

[31] Complete Works, XVI, 343.

[32] Quoted by Lang, Letters, I, 227.

[33] Letters, II, 4.

[34] Letters, I, 241. It should also be noted here that Swinburne had a copy of the 3 volume Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London (1865-1870) in his library. See Sotheby's Catalogue of the Library of A.C. Swinburne (London, 1916), entry 9.

[35] Lafcadio Hearn, "Swinburne's 'Hertha,'" Interpretations of Literature (New York, 1915), I, 365-366. More general treatments of this Asiatic influence are: Ranjee G. Shahani, "The Asiatic Element in Swinburne," Poetry Review, 33 (1942), 225-230; and F.A.C. Wilson, "Indian and Mithraic Influences on Swinburne's Pantheism. . .," PLL, 8 (supplement, Fall, 1972), 57-66. Wilson also notes the possible influence of The Laws of Manu on the creation myth in "Hymn of Man" (59).

[36] See Letters, I, 252.

[37] Emerson, "Brahma," ll. 9-12, Selected Writings of Emerson, ed. Atkinson, 802. Paul de Reul in L'Oeuvre de Swinburne (Brussels, 1922), 241, also puts forward the possible influence of Emerson's The Over-Soul and quotes the following passage: "the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and object are one." Emerson is, however, expressing a general Romantic notion.

[38] Letters, III, 15.

[39] See De Rerum Natura, III, 931-932, Lucretius on the Nature of Things, trans. Cyril Bailey (Oxford, 1950), 137. Swinburne had several copies of Lucretius in his library, and praises him as Bruno's predecessor in "The Feast of Giordano Bruno."

[40] The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus, tr. Thomas Taylor (London, 1896), 29. Swinburne also had a copy of this work in his library (entry 195, Sotheby's Catalogue).

[41] See Thorpe, Northern Antiquities, 410 and following. The tree of life is also part of the other traditions which Swinburne was investigating. As Wilson points out in "Indian and Mithraic

Influences . . .," 58, Chapter 15 of the Gita also includes the symbol of the tree. Equally important is the Greek symbol of the tree, which is involved in the myth of the Hesperides (see Chapter Three on "Hesperia"). An interesting general account of the symbol is Mrs. J.H. Philpot's The Sacred Tree (London, 1897) which Swinburne owned (see entry 532, Sotheby's Catalogue). She mentions two other interesting uses of the symbol, both of which Swinburne avoided as too involved with the "sky powers": in the Eddas, the Aesir or high gods created man and woman out of two trees (73); and in Hesiod, Zeus created the bronze age of men out of the trunks of ash trees (74).

[42] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. Archibald MacMechan (Boston, 1901), 24.

[43] Wendell Stacy Johnson also notices this similarity in "Swinburne and Carlyle," 120.

[44] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. MacMechan, 34, 13, and 25.

[45] "Hymn to Man," Poems, II, 102 and 96.

[46] "Tenebrae," Poems, II, 91.

[47] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 96.

[48] Roppen, Evolution and Poetic Belief, 192. McGann, Swinburne, 196, also provides an interesting analysis of the line, "Is the tongue not more than the speech is," of "Hymn of Man," showing how it points to the equal importance of body and soul.

[49] Ibid., 269.

[50] Ibid., 89-90 and 210.

[51] Ibid., 142-143.

[52] Ibid., 306 and 259.

[53] Ibid., 234.

[54] Complete Works, XV, 353. He suggests the same thing of Hugo, Ibid., III, 342. It should be noted that he was going over William Michael Rossetti's edition of Shelley at the same time as he was engaged in writing the poems of Songs before Sunrise. "Cor Cordium" of the volume is dedicated to Shelley.

[55] Letters, III, 14. He also suggests, Letters, III, 244 and IV, 145, that Christ certainly was no Christian; see also Complete Works, XIV, 165.

[56] See Deborah Dorfman, Blake in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven, 1969), especially 157.

[57] Complete Works, XVI, 163-164 and 232.

[58] Ibid., 331, note.

[59] Ibid., 322 and 311.

[60] Ibid., 323.

[61] Ibid (also quoted by Dorfman, 157).

[62] Ibid., 232.

[63] Ibid.

[64] See Ibid., 72-73 and 304, for instance. However, as suggested above, most often the "unredeemable" world of "brute nature or sham body of things" Swinburne explains as follows:

> The absolute body and essential soul . . . are with their energies, passive and active powers and pleasures, natural properties and liberties, of an imperishable and vital holiness; but their appended qualities, their form and law, their morals and philosophies, their reason and religion, these are perishable and damnable (207-208).

[65] Ibid., 200 and 150. In "Indian and Mithraic Influences. . .," 60, Wilson suggests that Swinburne does not follow the Indian idea that "nature is Maya, delusion, and that the source of all her wonders is the one indivisible spirit -- God."

[66] Ibid., 151.

[67] Letters, III, 14.

[68] Poems, II, 117, 95, and 234.

[69] Two Unpublished Manuscripts (San Francisco, 1927) in the Lilly Library at Indiana University; quoted by John A. Cassidy, Algernon C. Swinburne (New York, 1964), 36. God here is a kind of superego.

[70] Shelley, Queen Mab, VII, 1. 28 and Prometheus Unbound, I, 381-382, Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 787 and 216.

[71] Complete Works, XVI, 269 and 255-256. Swinburne, of course, reads this in a pantheistic fashion.

[72] Ibid., 235.

[73] Letters, II, 340 (1874).

[74] "The Eve of Revolution," Poems, II, 15-16.

[75] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 103 and 104. The last passage seems to be a reflection of Isaiah 63:1-6, where God's "raiment" is stained "red" by the blood of those he has "trampled" in his "wrath."

[76] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. MacMechan, 45. Swinburne also seems to have known the Völuspa directly and had, as suggested above, attempted an account of Thor's previous battles with the "Midgard-snake, the great World Serpent" (Carlyle, 44).

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 12.

[79] Ibid., 21; see 38 for Odin's connection with these same ideas.

[80] Ibid., 24.

[81] Contrasted to this, as well, is the "spring-wind" (l. 124) and the "spring-coloured hours" (l. 146) of Hertha before man enthroned this God. At the same time, the poem emphasizes that both are of Hertha (see below).

[82] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. MacMechan, 32 and 33.

[83] Johnson, "Swinburne and Carlyle," 118, note.

[84] Swinburne would also have noticed the editor's extension of Teufelsdröckh's clothes philosophy to suggest that the world is but the "Raiment" of "Spirit" and that Teufelsdröckh (with whom he is gradually identifying himself) worshipped Spirit "with a true Platonic mysticism" and yet could not "recommend either bodily or intellectual Nudity." Sartor Resartus, ed. Harrold, 207-208. For Swinburne, God is the "raiment" of man.

[85] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. MacMechan, 9.

[86] Johnson, "Swinburne and Carlyle," 118.

[87] "Mater Triumphalis," Poems, II, 145, and "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 104.

[88] They are also part of Swinburne's description of Blake's Urizen. See Complete Works, XVI, 77.

[89] Poems, V, 234, and Poems, III, 108. The second passage is also quoted by Johnson, who notes only the "raiment" imagery.

[90] Complete Works, XVI, 42 and 46.

[91] Complete Works, XV, 413, 414, and 416.

[92] Letters, II, 293.

[93] As Buckley suggests in The Victorian Temper (1951; reprinted New York, 1964), 188, ". . . Mill, more than any other Victorian thinker, was to undermine the prestige of Carlylean doctrine and lessen the authority of every other transcendental metaphysic -- was, as Morley remarked, 'to cut at the very root of the theological spirit.'"

[94] Sartor Resartus, ed. Harrold, 282, quoted above.

[95] Heroes and Hero-Worship, ed. MacMechan, 45. (Carlyle suggests, 44, in recounting Thor's early battle with the Jötun Skrymir, that Thor "was battling, say Norse critics, the old chaotic Earth in person.")

[96] Ibid. See Chapter One for the link which LaValley establishes between Carlyle's fear of the energies of the unconscious and nature and his political position.

[97] Compare the following lines from Shelley's Queen Mab, VI, 197-200:

> Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power
> Necessity! thou mother of the world!
> Unlike the God of human error, thou
> Requirest no prayers or praises . . . .

[98] Letters, II, 54. "Hymn of Man" is Swinburne's political formulation of the same theme.

[99] These two aspects of his idea have had a tremendous influence on the study of religion, myth, and anthropology, even though Bachofen himself is a relatively neglected figure. See Joseph Campbell's "Introduction" to Myth, Religion and Mother Right, Selected Writings of J.J. Bachofen, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, New Jersey, 1967).

[100] Ibid., 80. It is interesting to note that Bachofen stresses the importance of Tacitus' account of the feminine principle in Teutonic culture.

[101] Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language (New York, 1951), 207-208.

[102] See Joseph Campbell's "Introduction" to Myth, Religion and Mother Right, li-lii. Later, Ernst Curtius presented an account of Bachofen's theories in The History of Greece (1871).

[103] Poems, II, 24, 92, and 122.

[104] "Christmas Antiphones," Poems, II, 133-134.

[105] "Tenebrae," Poems, II, 90. He is also seen as an "earth-god," Poems, II, 124.

[106] "To Walt Whitman," Poems, II, 124.

[107] "Mater Dolorosa," Poems, II, 142 and 140.

[108] "Mater Triumphalis," Poems, II, 146.

[109] See also "Mentana," Poems, II, 53.

[110] See "Prelude," Poems, II, 8.

[111] See above and "Christmas Antiphones," *Poems*, II, 132.

[112] "In San Lorenzo," *Poems*, II, 172.

[113] See *Complete Works*, XVI, 285, for instance: "For so long nature has sat silent, her harps out of tune; the goddess herself has slept out all those years [eighteen Christian centuries], a dream among dreams, the ghostly regent of a ghostly generation." See Swinburne's "Christmas Antiphones," and "Perinde Ac Cadaver," *Poems*, II, 133 and 215.

[114] See above and *Complete Works*, XVI, 293-299. Many critics point out Swinburne's connection with Positivism in terms of his conception of Divine Humanity and his inversion of Christian myth to express the idea. As John Cassidy suggests in *Algernon C. Swinburne*, 121-122, Swinburne seems to have first encountered Comte's ideas in Hugo's *Les Contemplations* and *La Legende des Siècles*, and then would have known its tenets through Mill and Harriet Martineau. See W.M. Simon, "Auguste Comte's English Disciples," *VS*, 8 (1964), 161-172. The imagery, however, is just as likely from Shelley and Blake.

[115] See also "Song of the Standard," *Poems*, II, 187, and "A Song of Italy," (1867), *Poems*, II, 255. As Samuel Chew notes in *Swinburne* (1921; reprinted, Hamden, Connecticut, 1966), 102, "In contrast to the tricolor is the Austrian imperial banner, yellow and black, the symbol of autumnal decay and death."

[116] Quoted in Lafourcade, *La Jeunesse*, I, 254.

[117] *Poems*, II, 251.

[118] *Poems*, II, 66, quoted in full in Chapter One.

[119] *Poems*, II, 37.

[120] *Poems*, II, 43 and 44.

[121] *Poems*, II, 116. See also "The Eve of Revolution," *Poems*, II, 20-21.

[122] See "The Eve of Revolution," *Poems*, II, 19.

[123] "Perinde Ac Cadaver," *Poems*, II, 218.

[124] See "The Eve of Revolution," "The Litany of Nations," and "Ode on the Insurrection of Candia," *Poems*, II, 13, 16 and 200 and following.

[125] *Letters*, III, 56.

[126] *Letters*, I, 115.

[127] Ross C. Murfin, "Athens Unbound: A Study of Swinburne's *Erectheus*," *VP*, 12 (1974), 205.

[128] Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 377 and 378.

[129] William R. Rutland, Swinburne: A Nineteenth Century Hellene (Oxford, 1931), 242.

[130] Earth, says the Chorus, has the soul of a "new-made Mother," whereas "A sword is at the heart of the God thy brother." Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 393.

[131] Murfin, 217. The main associations are: light, wisdom, harvest, and virginity.

[132] Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 411.

[133] McGann, Swinburne, 129.

[134] Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 359.

[135] The identification of the Olympian powers and the Christian Godhead of Songs before Sunrise is subtle but present, not only in terms of Swinburne's use of the natural imagery of darkness and stormy war but also, as H.H. Hargreaves points out in "Swinburne's Greek Plays and God, 'The Supreme Evil,'" MLN, 76 (1961), 607-616, in his use of Biblical imagery and echoes (with some inversions). Swinburne uses these Biblical allusions (particularly to the plight of Jerusalem and the sufferings of Job) to suggest a connection between the cruel wrath of the Lord and that of the forces of the Olympian gods.

[136] See the Chorus' own recognition of these contraries, Poems, IV, 386.

[137] Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 347 and 378.

[138] Murfin, 210.

[139] Erechtheus, Poems, IV, 409 and 412.

[140] Ibid., 360, and Poems, II, 13.

[141] Letters, II, 79-80.

[142] See George M. Ridenour, "Swinburne on 'The Problem to Solve in Expression,'" VP, 9 (1971), 129-144.

[143] "The Litany of Nations," Poems, II, 64.

[144] "Genesis," Poems, II, 117.

[145] Ibid., 118.

[146] Ibid., 118.

[147] Ibid., 119-120.

[148] Ibid., 119.

[149] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 94.

[150] Letters, II, 37.

[151] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 98 and 96.

[152] Ibid., 97.

[153] As he says, "man hath speech" and forces are "dumb," Ibid., 98.

[154] "Prelude," Poems, II, 3-4.

[155] Ibid., 7-8. Swinburne's lines in "Two Leaders" to Carlyle quoted above ("Till man by day stood equal with his fate") should also be recalled here.

[156] William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 202-203, note.

[157] This phrase is used to describe both Schopenhauer and Wagner's thought by Cedric Hentschel, The Byronic Teuton (1940; reprinted, Folcroft, Pa., 1969), 87.

[158] See Ralph Hinsdale Goodale's "Schopenhauer and Pessimism in Nineteenth Century Literature," PMLA, 47 (1932), 240-261. He points out that although John Oxenford presented an outline of his philosophy in 1853 in the Westminster Review, Schopenhauer was not influential until the middle 1870's. Goodale does not list Swinburne as an early instance of Schopenhauer's influence, and suggests only that Swinburne is an instance of the "pessimism of transitoriness" (255).

[159] Letters, II, 38. The book he refers to is Careil's Hegel et Schopenhauer: études sur la philosophie allemand depuis Kant jusqu'à nos jours (1862); I have been unable to trace the review of the book. Gasperini's La Nouvelle Allemagne Musicale (Paris, 1866), however, mentions Careil's book, page 45.

[160] Francis Jacques Sypher Jr., "Swinburne and Wagner," VP, 9 (1971), 171.

[161] Letters, II, 11-12 and Sypher, "Swinburne and Wagner," 175. See Elliott Zuckerman, The First Hundred Years of Wagner's Tristan (New York and London, 1964), 88 and following, for an account of this debate. Gasperini also summarizes the debate (71-82).

[162] See Sypher, 172-173. Swinburne also mentions Wagner in several other letters to these friends: see Letters, I, 250, 295, 308; II, 60 and 231.

[163] Letters, II, 300 and note. A translation of Schopenhauer was not published until 1883. Hüffer (or Hueffer) did, however, include a summary of Schopenhauer's thought in Richard Wagner and the Music

of the Future (1874; reprinted, Freeport, New York, 1971), 7-14.

[164] Dr. David Asher, "Schopenhauer and Darwin," Journal of Anthropology, 1 (Jan. 1871), 312-332.

[165] E.M.W. Tillyard, "Swinburne: Hertha, 1870," Five Poems (London, 1948), 89. See also l. 45 -- "Dim changes of water."

[166] Roppen, Evolution and Poetic Belief, 183 and 187.

[167] Letters, V, 194; Complete Works, XVI, 378; and Letters, II, 334. Swinburne makes only occasional references to Darwin himself in his letters, and wrote of him only in his satire of the Baconians. In the satirical "Tennyson or Darwin?" (Complete Works, XIV, 342-345) he cites such lines in In Memoriam as, "so careful of the type, so careless of the single life," to prove that the author of the theories of "natural selection, of the survival of the fittest and of the origin of species" was also the author of the works credited to Tennyson.

[168] Letters, II, 38. Swinburne does not discuss here, or elsewhere, Schopenhauer's ideas. He does however, suggest that Leconte de Lisle's philosophy was like Schopenhauer's (Letters, III, 166). He valued the poet not only because of his craftsmanship but also because of the fact that he was an "irreconcilable and uncompromising antagonist of the Demon of Heaven" (Letters, V, 41), and an even more fierce "antiChristian" than Shelley (Complete Works, XIV, 322).

[169] Wagner on Music and Drama: A Compendium of Richard Wagner's Prose Works, ed. Albert Goldman and Evert Sprinchorn, trans. H. Ashton Ellis (New York, 1964), 271.

[170] Rose Pfeffer, Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus (Lewisburg, Pa., 1972), 29-46. This excellent book includes a useful comparison between Nietzsche and Goethe and Spinoza. Her interpretation of Nietzsche differs from Arthur Danto's in Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York, 1965), but seems much sounder.

[171] Zuckerman, 82. See The Case of Wagner, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, ed. Geoffrey Clive (New York, 1965), 253-266.

[172] Poems, II, 147.

[173] Poems, II, 235 and 236. Here Swinburne returns to the imagery of the "Prelude" and, presumably, to the difference between his ideas and those of Arnold and Tennyson.

[174] Poems, II, 123. The swimmer is, of course, a symbol which Whitman himself used.

[175] "Mater Triumphalis," Poems, II, 148.

[176] "On the Downs," Poems, II, 191 and 194.

[177] As the singer of "Mater Triumphalis" says, "I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful mother." See also "The Pilgrims."

[178] *Letters*, II, 335 and "The Pilgrims," *Poems*, II, 106.

[179] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, quoted by Richard Schacht, *Hegel and After* (Pittsburg, 1975), 16.

[180] As David S. Thatcher points out in *Nietzsche in England* (Toronto, 1970), the philosopher was not known in England until the 1890's, and the translation of his work only began in seriousness in 1895.

[181] Thatcher, 178. In *Letters*, II, 231 (1873), Swinburne wrote to George Powell that he had read an announcement in the *Guardian* of "great things in the Wagner direction, as forthcoming from our friend Dannreuther and others . . . ." As Lang notes, the announcement concerned Dannreuther's lecture on the "Music of the Future."

[182] Thatcher, 100 and following. Havelock Ellis wrote three articles on Nietzsche for the *Savoy* in 1896, and they were revised for his *Affirmations* (1898). Swinburne's relationship with Ellis was in the context of the "Mermaid Series" of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. See *Letters*, V, 168 (1886) and 183 (1887).

[183] Thatcher, 123, 52 and following, and 126 and following.

[184] Lafcadio Hearn in "Studies in Swinburne," *Pre-Raphaelite and Other Poets* (New York, 1922), 134, notes that Swinburne's ground of being is as amoral as Nietzsche's; Paul de Reul, *L'Oeuvre de Swinburne*, (1922), 144, in the context of *Atalanta*, that Swinburne had perceived a Dionysian element in Greek literature before Nietzsche did; Arthur Symons in "Algernon Charles Swinburne," *Figures of Several Centuries* (London, 1916), 165, that Swinburne's "arraignment of Christianity" was as "wholesale" as Nietzsche's (and Leconte de Lisle's).

[185] See, for example, *The Dawn of Day*, ed. Clive, 394.

[186] Pfeffer, *Nietzsche*, 90 and 43. Nietzsche opposed only "Darwinisticism," to use Peckham's term again.

[187] Ibid., 40. See Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*, ed. Clive, 394.

[188] In the *Twilight of the Idols*, ed. Clive, 72, Nietzsche allies Christianity with Platonism and considers both a "superior swindle." He does, however, as Clive suggests, xxviii, retain a "grudging respect for Christ."

[189] *The Joyful Wisdom*, ed. Clive, 389-390.

[190] *Thoughts out of Season*, ed. Clive, 348; and Pfeffer, 87.

[191] Pfeffer, 198.

[192] See The Joyful Wisdom, ed. Clive, 68-70; The Twilight of the Idols, Ibid., 256; and Beyond Good and Evil, Ibid., 404. As Karl Jaspers points out in Nietzsche, trans. F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (1935; Tucson, 1965), 251-279, Nietzsche particularly opposed nationalism and looked for a "One Europe."

[193] McGann, Swinburne, 35 and 38. See also 249.

[194] Quoted by Pfeffer, 90.

[195] See above and Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, I, 254.

[196] W. Brooks Drayton Henderson, Swinburne and Landor (London, 1918), 83-89. Henderson provides the best analysis of Swinburne's differences with Mazzini, noting also that Swinburne was more of an individualist than Mazzini, and presented not one's "duty to God" but a kind of "voluntary sacrifice for a cause, and for humanity" (191).

[197] Letters, II, 37.

[198] Letters, VI, 4.

[199] Poems, I, viii. As W. Brooks Henderson notes (3-4), Swinburne discerned his differences with Hugo as early as "To Victor Hugo" of Poems and Ballads (1866): "We /Lift younger eyes and see /Less of high hope, less light on wandering hours."

[200] Letters, I, 115. At a later date Swinburne also said Prometheus Unbound is superb music, but "from the dramatic or the prophetic point of view is almost liable to the charge of absolute futility." Complete Works, XV, 336.

[201] Shelley's "Preface" to Prometheus Unbound, ed. Clark, 326.

[202] Letters, I, 115.

Chapter III

[1] As he wrote in 1872, "At an early age . . . I became convinced of the truth of the republican principle, and I have always looked to the land of Dante and Mazzini -- magna parens -- to take the lead in realizing the idea in Europe." Letters, II, 176.

[2] Stanzas II and V, Complete Works, I, 115 and 118.

[3] See Philip Henderson, Swinburne, 27. Other early works which should be mentioned are: "The Ride from Milan" (1858) and such college essays as: "The Constitutional Influence of Small Republics," "English Government in India," "Church Imperialism," and "Foreign Intervention." See Henderson, 28-29, for a brief account of these essays.

[4] "In Memory of Walter Savage Landor" and "To Victor Hugo," Poems, I, 134-136 and 144-150. The last poem was mentioned in Chapter Two.

[5] An unsigned review of Poems and Ballads in the London Review, included in Hyder, Swinburne: The Critical Heritage, 35.

[6] As Harold Nicolson tells us,

> [Swinburne] would go to dinner-parties and get drunk and arrogant, and his voice would shrill up to a note of self-assertiveness which rendered him offensive to strangers, and which filled his friends with anguish, anxiety, and dismay. An unbound Prometheus, he would delight in adding astonishment to the surprise already occasioned; he would boast triumphantly of the variety and the deep-red color of his vices -- vices which he was pathetically incapable of practising . . . . Swinburne, (1926; reprinted, New York, 1969), 95.

The last phrase is a reference to Nicolson's contention, also maintained in his Swinburne and Baudelaire (1930; reprinted, Folcroft, Pennsylvania, 1969), 10, that Swinburne's "sexual impulse" was "deformed by partial impotence."

[7] Letter of January 12, 1869, quoted by Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 522.

[8] Letters, I, 195-196. See also Letters, V, 207, where Swinburne speaks of the "morally identical influence of Gabriel Gautier and Théophile Rossetti."

[9] Poems, II, 3 and 6.

[10] Lafourcade, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (London, 1932), 142.

[11] See the recent biography of Jean Overton Fuller, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (London, 1968), especially 143 and following, for the most exhaustive treatment of the subject.

[12] Nicolson, Swinburne, 104.

[13] Praz, The Romantic Agony, 237. It is important to note here that although Praz proclaims earlier critics like Nicolson and Lafourcade as his authorities (214-215 and 238-239), they actually make this particular connection much more tenuous and do not dismiss the volume with this observation. Nicolson, for instance, states:

> Not only, however, did Swinburne see in Liberty an idealisation of his own temperament, not only do we recognize in the shining gestures of his Republican Virgin both the poignant cruelty of Dolores and the aloof gentleness of Atalanta, but an endeavor is made in the more important poems of Songs before Sunrise to give to this conception a far more universal meaning, to found thereon a whole philosophy of life. (Swinburne, 135)

And Lafourcade, in the process of qualifying his earlier statements concerning the "transformation" of Swinburne when he rededicates himself to Republicanism, merely suggests that "it would not be impossible to discover, even in Songs before Sunrise some of the features of sadic sensuality which is so characteristic of Poems and Ballads, although this is rather exceptional." (Swinburne; A Literary Biography, 182)

[14] Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), 348; Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 241-242 and 242.

[15] Louis J. Bragman, "The Case of Algernon Charles Swinburne . . .," Psychoanalytic Review, 21 (1934), 73.

[16] "Wordsworth and Byron," Complete Works, XIV, 193.

[17] Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 354-355. It should be noted that Nicolson (Swinburne, 104-105) calls the poems of Poems and Ballads "subjective lyrical poems," and says that Swinburne's "contention that they are merely experiments in dramatic monologues . . . evokes a welcome smile."

[18] Letters, I, 193.

[19] Poems, I, vi-vii. He is amused by both critical perspectives, by those "who insisted on regarding all the studies of passion or sensation attempted or achieved in it as either confessions of positive fact or excursions of absolute fancy."

[20] His review of Songs before Sunrise in the Academy, 15 January, 1871, is included in Hyder's Swinburne: The Critical Heritage, 139-145.

[21] He says the same thing in the "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, vii-viii.

[22] "On the Downs," Poems, II, 195.

[23] When Swinburne was considering a reissue of Poems and Ballads with the early poems removed and put with other unpublished verses in a "companion volume of Early Poems," he made a list for Chatto of the poems which were not intrinsic to the volume. Most of these poems are not discussed here. See Letters III, 200, and Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, Appendices I to III, 559-562.

[24] Letters, I, 197.

[25] See Complete Works, XVI, 360-363, and below.

[26] "Dolores," 1. 9, Poems, I, 156.

[27] Letters, I, 195-196.

[28] Complete Works, XVI, 412-414. See also Letters, III, 9. It should also be recalled that these comments are in keeping with Swinburne's remarks on Shelley's Queen Mab.

[29] Buchanan had praised Whitman and castigated Rossetti and Swinburne in The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day (1872), and Swinburne's Under the Microscope is in part an answer to Buchanan. This, as well as Whitman's own remarks on Swinburne's meaningless verse and Swinburne's apprehensiveness about Whitman's homosexuality, has been put forward as a cause for Swinburne's supposed change of mind about Whitman. However, William J. Goede in "Swinburne and the Whitmaniacs," Victorian Newsletter, 33 (1968), 16-21, has shown that Swinburne's views of Whitman are actually consistent. Cecil Lang in "Swinburne and American Literature . . .," AL, 19 (1947-1948), 340, suggests that the change is only one of "tone." His change of tone is the result of a desire to right a critical imbalance: when Swinburne first wrote about Whitman, he was little known or appreciated; but by the time he wrote "Whitmania" (1887), the American poet was being ranked with Shakespeare. A good case for the consistency of Swinburne's critical standards is presented by James Evans Suiter, "Swinburne and the Main Stream of Victorian Poetic Theory," Diss. New York University, 1959, 261 and following. See also Marvel Shmiefsky's "Swinburne's Anti-Establishment Poetics," VP, 9 (1971), 262: he says that both he and Wellek agree that Swinburne's later remarks on art for art's sake are a "retreat from an overexposed position rather than an abandonment of his basic views."

[30] Letters, I, 267 and 268. (The same observation about Whitman is made in William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 344, and about his own difficulties in writing prophetic art in Letters, I, 196.)

[31] Ibid., 268.

[32] Letters, II, 95 (emphasis his).

[33] Ibid., 97.

[34] See, for instance, Graham Hough's Image and Experience (London, 1960), especially 182-187 for an indication of the difficulty of applying this term to English literature.

[35] René Wellek, The Later Nineteenth Century, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950 (New Haven and London, 1965), IV, 409 and 411.

[36] Involved here is a movement in aesthetics from the beautiful to the sublime and the horrible and, finally, to the grotesque (which may also be employed for the purposes of satire and shock).

[37] Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, 38-56.

[38] In this context see Patricia Thomson, The Victorian Heroine (London, 1956); Francoise Basch, Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel, 1837-1868, trans. Anthony Rudolf (London, 1974); and Katherine Moore, "Victorian Wives in Fiction," Victorian Wives (London, 1974), 115-156.

[39] In The Mind and Art of Coventry Patmore (New York, 1957), John C. Reid demonstrates Patmore's knowledge of and affinities with Neo-Platonic and Romantic thought (especially Coleridge's).

[40] "Lilith," Rossetti's Poems, ed. Oswald Doughty (London, 1961), 142.

[41] Frank Kermode, Romantic Image (New York, 1957), 60 and 62. Kermode's book, which focuses on Yeats and the later tradition, is still the best discussion of this aspect of the fatal woman. The woman as a symbol of art is, of course, difficult to distinguish from the woman who is dangerous because of her Sphinx-like knowledge of the universe (its amoral processes of creation and destruction), or the woman who represents the unattainable realm of the ideal.

[42] See Ruth Z. Temple, The Critic's Alchemy: A Study of the Introduction of French Symbolism into England (New York, 1953), for a succinct account of the influence of the three French poets on Swinburne's aesthetics.

[43] Letters, I, 51-52.

[44] Complete Works, XVI, 363 and 369-370. It is interesting to note that Meredith wrote to Swinburne along the same lines, saying that Poems and Ballads "has done the critical world good by making men look boldly at the restrictions imposed upon art by our damnable bourgeoisie." Letters, I, 231.

[45] Poems, V, 401.

[46] Ibid., 404 and 405.

[47] "M. Prudhomme on Art and Science at the International Exhibition," written in 1862. Complete Works, XV, 401, 402 and 403.

[48] Ibid., 406-407.

[49] Ibid., 402.

[50] Complete Works, XVI, 381.

[51] Complete Works, XVI, 372.

[52] "Tennyson and Musset," Complete Works, XIV, 333-334. See Chapter V for Swinburne's comment on Tennyson's Vivien.
J. Devey's "Androtheist School . . .," A Comparative Estimate of Modern English Poets (London, 1873) is another example of a review which compares the women of Swinburne and Tennyson:

> Woman is the favorite theme of both. But in Tennyson, she is the chaste daughter of Heaven, the home of all virtues, the nurse of all tender delights, the one gift by which the labours of life are sweetened . . . . In [Swinburne], she is the source of bitterness, made more painful by the sweetness with which torment is preluded,

> the subject of blasphemy against the most high gods, the engine of their wrath when they plot the destruction of men, the curse which makes the fruit of life turn to ashes on the lip, the strong note of discord which jars the otherwise rich concert of music, harmonizing the elements of the world (337).

[53] Letters, I, 123. Here, as often in the letters, he refers to de Sade. Added here should be Swinburne's "reviews" of the works of "Ernest Clouët" and "Felecien Cossu." Clouët's work Les Abimes included essays on the Promethean de Sade and on the sexual relationship between Jeanne d'Arc and Gilles de Rais; Cossu's Les Amours Etiques was a collection of licentious poems like "Spasm d'Amour" and "Messaline." Swinburne almost got away with the hoax, but the editor of the Spectator eventually suspected the existence of such writers. Another satire, "La Soeur de la reine," included, as Swinburne remembered it in 1880, Victoria's liaison with Wordsworth and then Lord Russell. See Letters, IV, 169. These works and other hoaxes and burlesques are included in Cecil Y. Lang's edition of New Writings By Swinburne (Syracuse, New York, 1964).

[54] Of course, perversity itself has its serious elements: as Herbert Marcuse suggests in Eros and Civilization (1955; Boston, 1966), 49-51, perversity is a rebellion against "paternal domination" and the laws of society. See also Georges Bataille, Death and Sensuality (New York, 1962), especially 18, on eroticism as transgression.

[55] Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 370.

[56] Ian Fletcher, Swinburne (London, 1973), 3.

[57] As he says in "Notes of Some Pictures of 1868," "Beauty may be strange, quaint, terrible, may play with pain as with pleasure, handle a horror till she leave it a delight . . . ." Complete Works, XV, 215-216.

[58] See James K. Robinson, "A Neglected Phase of the Aesthetic Movement: English Parnassianism," PMLA, 68 (1953), 733-754.

[59] Arthur O'Shaughnessey, "The Line of Beauty," quoted by Buckley, The Victorian Temper, 221.

[60] Complete Works, XVI, 137-138 and 138.

[61] "Charles Baudelaire," Complete Works, XIII, 423.

[62] "Faustine," Poems, I, 106.

[63] "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Complete Works, XV, 7-8, 13 and 4. (The jewel image is also present here.)

[64] "Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence," Complete Works, XV, 192, quoted in full in Chapter One. This important and certainly influential passage is not mentioned by Kermode in his discussion of the Salome-like dancer in Yeats.

[65] "Wordsworth and Byron," Complete Works, XIV, 160. Here Swinburne objects to "a school of poetry subordinated to any school of doctrine, subjected and shaped and utilised by any moral idea to the exclusion of native impulse and spiritual instinct . . . ."

[66] See Peters' chapter, "Harmony: The Supernal Loveliness," The Crowns of Apollo (Detroit, 1965), 151-164; and Connolly's Swinburne's Theory of Poetry (New York, 1964), 66-77 for a more thorough treatment of the subject.

[67] "Byron," Complete Works, XV, 121.

[68] Under the Microscope, Complete Works, XVI, 399.

[69] Ibid., 400. Here, "harmony" is "the inner sense . . . which cannot but speak in music, the innate and spiritual instinct of sweetness and fitness and exaltation which cannot but express itself in height and perfection of song."

[70] Complete Works, XIII, 242-244.

[71] "Whistler's Lecture on Art," Complete Works, XVI, especially 22.

[72] Complete Works, XIII, 389. Hugo, of course, himself proclaimed "La liberté dans l'ordre, la liberté dans l'art."

[73] Complete Works, XI, 6. See also XIV, 242, on Shelley, and XV, 7, on Rossetti. In both he blends the sensuous with the meditative as well as form with idea. In both, one might add, he also refuses to define.

[74] See Complete Works, XV, 351, for example.

[75] Rosamond, I, Tragedies, I, 236, quoted in full in Chapter I.

[76] Ibid., 234 and 239. Constance represents the first state (chastity) and Eleanor the second.

[77] The word "shame" occurs at least a dozen times in both The Complaint of Rosamond and "The Epistle of Rosamond . . . ."

[78] Rosamond, I, Tragedies, I, 233. See 240 for her comments on "fear."

[79] Ibid., Act IV, 267, and Act V, 279.

[80] Ibid., Act I, 241 and Act V, 282. See also Act IV, 273.

[81] Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 276.

[82] Gerald B. Kinneavy, "Character and Action in Swinburne's Chastelard," VP, 5 (1967), 34-35.

[83] Chastelard, I, ii, Tragedies, II, 25. See below on Venus.

[84] Julian Baird, "Swinburne, Sade and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox," VP, 9 (1971), 49-75.

[85] As Praz points out in The Romantic Agony, 102, de Sade merely reversed the optimistic conceptions of Rousseau: nature is evil, therefore the natural man should be evil. See Nietzsche's comments on the nihilism of those who but reverse the optimistic conception of nature, quoted in Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche, 328.

[86] He even tried de Sade out on the staid Watts-Dunton. See, for instance, Letters, II, 314.

[87] The poem is included in Lang's New Writings by Swinburne, 7-10.

[88] Letters, I, 57.

[89] The allusion to Blake's "tiger" in "Charenton" may indicate that Swinburne believed de Sade did put forward the amorality of nature. Baird, 51, notes this parallel. I disagree, however, with his conclusion that for Swinburne "[t]here can . . . be nothing evil about . . . Nature . . ." (53).

[90] Ibid., 52.

[91] Complete Works, XV, 351 and 352.

[92] Letters, III, 116-117.

[93] William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 165-166, 195, 166-167, and 167. Swinburne also notes in the context of Tirzah (170) that "those who live in subjection to the senses would in their turn bring the senses into subjection; unable to see beyond the body, they find it worth while to refuse the body its right to freedom."

[94] Letters, I, 194.

[95] Complete Works, XVI, 249.

[96] In The Marquis de Sade: An Essay by Simone de Beauvoir with Selections from his Writings (New York, 1953), 55, Beauvoir disagrees with the Christian interpretation of such critics as Klossowski. She seems to be more in agreement with Bataille, who in Death and Sensuality links de Sade with the transgression of taboo, the breaking down of the patterns of our "discontinuous existence" and the achieving of "continuity" through the dissolution of individuality and death. In "The Pornographic Imagination," Perspectives on Pornography, ed. Douglas A. Hughes (New York, 1970), Susan Sontag discusses the reinterpretation of de Sade after World War II by French critics (noting that Bataille has a more profound sense of transgression than de Sade) and suggests, as well, that pornography attempts psychic dislocation and that we must not see all attempts at self-transcendence as religious (whatever the religious vocabulary of such works as The Story of O). Ihab Hassan alters the analysis somewhat in "Sade:

Prisoner of Consciousness," The Perverse Imagination, ed. Irving Buchen (New York, 1970), 41-52: de Sade is a solipsist trying desperately to break out of the prison of the self. All of these interpretations, as we will see, still establish an essential difference between Swinburne and de Sade.

[97] Riencourt, Sex and Power, 243 and following.

[98] Alfred Cobban, "The Triumph of Pessimism," HJ, 40 (1942), 136:

> [a]n association of pessimism and the recovery of religious feelings is not unnatural, for the condemning of life, which is the essence of the pessimistic world-outlook, normally arises from a consciousness of its imperfections compared to some otherworldly standard.

Praz, The Romantic Agony, 306 and following; Rupert Croft-Cooke, Feasting with Panthers (New York, 1968), 2.

[99] T.S. Eliot's comment is representative:

> It was once the mode to take Baudelaire's Satanism seriously, as it is now the tendency to present Baudelaire as a serious and Catholic Christian. . . . I think the latter view . . . is nearer the truth than the former, but it needs considerable reservation. . . . Satanism . . . itself was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door. "Baudelaire," Selected Essays by T.S. Eliot (London, 1966), 421-422.

[100] Complete Works, XIII, 423.

[101] Complete Works, XV, 23, also quoted in Chapter I. It is interesting to note as well that Swinburne considers Villon to be one of the first poets to find himself in such a position: he is "the first modern and the last mediaeval poet," "not utterly held fast, though still sorely struggling, in the jaws of hell and the ages of faith," Complete Works, XIV, 100.

[102] Complete Works, XIV, 314.

[103] Complete Works, XV, 456. It is also interesting to note that St. Theresa is the "patroness of the Christian side" of Solomon's art (457).

[104] Letters, VI, 153.

[105] Morley's review is included in Hyder's Swinburne: The Critical Heritage, 42-43 and 48.

[106] "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Complete Works, XV, 23, also quoted in Chapter I.

[107] See Complete Works, XIII, 163-164. Here Swinburne in quoting a passage from Sordello.

[108] Complete Works, XV, 158.

[109] See The Dawn of Day, ed. Clive, 537.

[110] See Nietzsche Contra Wagner, ed. Clive, 66.

[111] Human, All Too Human, II, ed. Clive, 110.

[112] Terry L. Meyers, "Shelley's Influence on Atalanta in Calydon," VP, 14 (1976), 154. Meyers not only notes significant verbal echoes but also cites the letter to Lady Trevelyan, quoted here in Chapter Two, as proof that Swinburne had Shelley in mind when he was writing Atalanta and was anxious to avoid the "philanthropic doctrinaire views and 'progress of the species'" of Prometheus Unbound (Letters, I, 115).

[113] Ibid., 151.

[114] Atalanta in Calydon, Poems, IV, 248; Prometheus Unbound, II, v, 48-49 and IV, 319-502 passim. (All further references to Swinburne's play in this section of the thesis will be included in the text itself.) Unfortunately, Meyers has slipped here, as these particular words are actually addressed to Apollo, not Artemis. But the point remains, as Apollo and Artemis are "Twin-born" forces. In the lines which Meyers quotes from Prometheus Unbound, Asia has assumed the light of Apollo, it is interesting to note.

[115] Prometheus Unbound, IV, 207; Meyers, 151.

[116] Prometheus Unbound, II, v, 20-28. Artemis is less directly associated with Aphrodite or Venus, except in terms of the effect of Atalanta on Meleager. See below.

[117] Meyers, 151.

[118] Marion Clyde Wier, The Influence of Aeschylus and Euripides on the Structure and Content of Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus (Ann Arbour, Michigan, 1920), 37.

[119] Shelley's Jupiter is, of course, associated with winter. See, for example, the following lines:

> The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
> Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
> Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
> Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
> His beak in poison not his own, tears up
> My heart . . . .
> (Prometheus Unbound, I, 31-36)

The "winged hound" here may also, although less directly, be associated with Atalanta. Althaea answers the Chorus' "When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces" with, "Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day" (249 and 251). And Atalanta, who is the instrument of the final curse of Artemis, comes with "twain hounds" (291).

[120] In the Notes, Swinburne mentions the statue and quotes the relevant lines from Shelley's poem (Complete Works, XVI, 367). Richard Mathews also remarks on the relevance of "Hermaphroditus" to

Atalanta in "Heart's Love and Heart's Division: The Quest for Unity in Atalanta in Calydon," VP, 9 (1971), 42.

[121] As Jean Fuller points out in Swinburne, 85, the poet was also familiar with the "metaphysical concept" of hermaphroditism in Balzac's Seraphita (see Letters, I, 32). Fuller also links the poem with the Fragoletta of Henri de Latouche (and with Swinburne's own poem of the same name). Fragoletta is actually a Lesbian and is therefore closer to Atalanta.

[122] Poems, I, 80 and 79.

[123] Complete Works, XVI, 368.

[124] Edward Thomas, Algernon Charles Swinburne, 17.

[125] In addition to the speeches of Atalanta and Althaea quoted above, see 265, where Althaea says of Atalanta, "Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed wars /Are deadlier than her lips or braided hair."

[126] In the "Prelude," as quoted in Chapter Two, man has no other guide than his own soul and is otherwise "Helmless in middle turn of tide."

[127] "The Poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Complete Works, XV, 23, quoted above.

[128] Prometheus Unbound, I, 8.

[129] John O. Jordan, "The Sweet Face of Mothers: Psychological Patterns in Atalanta in Calydon," VP, 11 (1973), 106.

[130] McGann, Swinburne, 99 and 100. The choral ode on the goddess of fate, 312 and following, shows that her power is linked with Aphrodite -- once again, both being seen as negative forces by the Chorus.

[131] Thomas L. Wymer, "Swinburne's Tragic Vision in Atalanta in Calydon," VP, 9 (1971), 5. Wymer quite correctly identifies Swinburne's position with what he calls a "liberating Dionysian neo-paganism" (1), but he incorrectly identifies this attitude of living "in and with the fullest devotion to life itself, in the pursuit of fertility, vitality, joy, intensity of experience," (9) with Meleager's attitude, which he maintains is the opposite of Althaea's. However, this interpretation leads him to an inadequate treatment of Meleager's relationship with Atalanta.

[132] Morse Peckham, Victorian Revolutionaries (New York, 1970), especially 257.

[133] The psychological perspective on Althaea -- or Atalanta -- has not been considered here. Both McGann and Jordan link Althaea's love for Meleager with a "reciprocal Oedipal desire." Jordan, 101, notes that this is only one of the levels of meaning in the play, and he remarks that "[t]he definitive essay on Atalanta remains to be

written."

[134] See Prometheus Unbound, I, especially 140-143. Meyers does not investigate this parallel between Althaea and Shelley's Earth. Once again, it should be added, Swinburne's point is that this force is destructive as well as creative.

[135] See Poems, IV, 255-258 and 314.

[136] Fromm, The Forgotten Language, 222.

[137] Atalanta herself, of course, continues to be in the service of patriarchal religion and does not advocate the overthrow of the gods.

[138] Baird, "Swinburne, Sade, and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox," 56.

[139] "A Ballad of Life," Poems, I, 1 and 2.

[140] Baird, 61.

[141] "A Ballad of Death," Poems, I, 5.

[142] "Hymn to Proserpine," Poems, I, 71. As discussed in Chapter Two, she is therefore the daughter of the Great Goddess.

[143] "Laus Veneris," Poems, I, ll. 390-392, 25. All subsequent references to the poem in this section of Chapter Three will be included in the text itself.

[144] Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, "The Legend of Venus," Essays and Studies, Educational and Literary (Baltimore, 1890), 180. Gildersleeve adds that her "grandest emblem" is the sea.

[145] The World-Soul is identified not only with love but also often with Venus. In his Commentary on Plato's Symposium, Ficino, for example, transforms Plato's two Venuses (the first associated with the spiritual ascent to celestial harmony and the second with a sensual descent into disharmony) into symbols of the Intellectual Principle and the World-Soul:

> . . . Venus is two-fold: one is clearly that intelligence which we said was in the Angelic Mind; the other is that power of generation with which the World-Soul is endowed. . . . This latter Venus translates sparks of that divine glory into earthly matter. (Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium, translated and introduced by Sears Reynold Jayne (Columbia, 1944), 142.)

Of course this is the Neo-Platonic interpretation; for a pantheist like Swinburne there is no transcendent One or Mind.

[146] See Philip Stephan Barto, Tannhauser and the Venusberg (New York, 1916), vii, for a summary of Grimm's treatment of the legend.

[147] Clyde K. Hyder, "Swinburne's Laus Veneris and the Tannhäuser Legend," PMLA, 45 (1930), 1204. Hyder particularly makes a case for the influence of the translation of the old German ballad on Tannhäuser in Once a Week of August 17, 1861.

[148] Quoted by W. Brooks Drayton Henderson, Swinburne and Landor, 103.

[149] William Blake, Complete Works, XVI, 141.

[150] Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 365.

[151] As Swinburne also suggests in his own commentary on the poem, Ibid., Tannhäuser is "desirous of penitential pain and damned to joyless pleasure."

[152] See, however, George D. Economou, "The Two Venuses and Courtly Love," In Pursuit of Perfection, ed. Joan M. Ferrante and George D. Economu (New York and London, 1975), 17-50.

[153] Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 365-366.

[154] Poems, III, 56. The contrast between the sea-flowers or meadow flowers of the "northern shore" and the "Half-faded fiery blossoms" of Baudelaire's art at the beginning of the poem also suggests an essential difference between the poets. As we will see, Swinburne continually associates himself with the northern landscape and the sea.

[155] Complete Works, XVI, 136.

[156] Baird, "Swinburne, Sade, and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox," 69 and 70. Baird's article is the most thorough treatment of Swinburne's poem.

[157] McGann, Swinburne, 257.

[158] In some versions the Pope's rod blossoms after Tannhäuser leaves. Swinburne omits mention of this fact because it would be impossible for Tannhäuser to know and it would be inconvenient for Swinburne to include. The emblem of the authority of Rome is a bundle of birch rods, and Swinburne also uses this symbol in Songs before Sunrise.

[159] This recalls the imagery associated with the false God in Songs before Sunrise.

[160] "Faustine," ll. 65-72, Poems, I, 108. All subsequent references in this section of the chapter will be included in the text itself.

[161] Complete Works, XVI, 364. The speaker is often, and incorrectly, identified with a condemned gladiator because of the

epigram of the poem, "Ave Faustina Imperatrix, morituri te salutant."

[162] Ibid., 360.

[163] "Dolores," ll. 3-4, Poems, I, 154. All subsequent references to the poem in this section of the chapter will be included in the text itself.

[164] The lineage of Swinburne's Dolores is quite carefully drawn: Venus and Bacchus, symbols of love and fertility, are succeeded by Libitina and Priapus, only one aspect of their original powers. Libitina, according to Lemprière, was originally an aspect of Venus or Proserpine, but she becomes the separate Roman goddess of funerals. Similarly, the fertility of Bacchus becomes the lechery of Priapus. Through such mythological descent, Swinburne conveys man's changing attitude to things of this earth and of the body.

[165] Like Faustine, Dolores is, according to the speaker, at the height of her powers when the gladiators of Rome died for her. See ll. 240-248, 162. Swinburne associates lust and cruelty with the tyranny of Rome as well as with the tyranny of the Christian God.

[166] Complete Works, XVI, 366 and 361. The "deadlier Venus incarnate" of Michaelangelo's woman may be recalled here. She, too, is "fresh from hell," it should be noted (see XV, 160-161, quoted in Chapter One).

[167] See Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods, 6-7, for an account (taken from Livy) of the procession of the Great Goddess into Rome. Cybele is not named in the poem itself, but is in the Notes (Complete Works, XVI, 361).

[168] See Showerman, 108 and 109. As Showerman indicates, 109, "The mere title Mater Dei, then coming into frequent use, would instantly provoke a comparison with the Mater Deum, and the formal bestowal of the former title on the Virgin in Council in 430 A.D. might well have seemed in the eyes of the Pagans like despoiling their fallen goddess of even her title."

[169] See, for example, Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (1920; reprinted, New York, 1957) and Riencourt, Sex and Power, 134 and following.

[170] See Edward Gibbon's account of Julian's character in The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London, 1900), I, 350-352.

[171] See Robert Browning, The Emperor Julian (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), 58-59 and 138-143. Julian was actually initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries, as Cybele was identified with her Greek counterpart.

[172] See Gibbon, I, 367 and Browning, 182.

[173] See ll. 359, 165: Mary, says the speaker to Dolores, is "White-robed, and thy raiment is ruddy." Lines 401-416, 167, indicate the bloody sacrifices of the early cult of Cybele.

[174] See lines 81-88 for the cruelty and 157-160 for the barrenness of the creeds of Christianity. Mary herself is seen as a cruel slayer (l. 357).

[175] Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 434-435; and Praz, The Romantic Agony, 233.

[176] As he says to Dolores,

Hast thou told all thy secrets the last time,
  And bared all thy beauties to one?
Ah, where shall we go then for pastime,
  If the worst that can be has been done? (ll. 97-100, 157)

[177] Complete Works, XVI, 361.

[178] "Dolores," and "Ilicet," Poems, I, 156 and 74.

[179] Complete Works, XVI, 362.

[180] "The Garden of Proserpine," ll. 13-24, Poems, I, 169. The last line is a reference to the green fields of ll. 5-7, which are contrasted with the "bloomless buds of poppies" of the fields of Proserpine, l. 25 and following.

[181] "Hymn to Proserpine," l. 54, Poems, I, 70. All subsequent references to the poem in this section of the chapter will be included in the text.

[182] "The Triumph of Time," ll. 269-276, Poems, I, 43. As we have seen with regard to Venus, the two symbol-clusters of land and sea are mingled throughout the volume. In "The Garden of Proserpine" itself, the image of the poppied garden gradually merges with the image of the sea of death: "even the weariest river /Winds somewhere safe to sea."

[183] See Baird, "Swinburne, Sade, and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox," 67-68 and McGann, Swinburne, 257-258, for a more thorough treatment of the "theme of constant wakefulness." As McGann suggests, "the pain of his immortality gets sharply particularized in the image of his reddened eyes, burning to the socket from their perpetual wakefulness . . . ."

[184] "The Garden of Proserpine," l. 95, Poems, I, 172.

[185] "The Pilgrims," Poems, II, 106.

[186] Mary in "Dolores" is both the moon-goddess and the goddess of death, it should be noted.

[187] Empedocles, II, ll. 199-206, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 435.

Empedocles finds himself "miserably bandied to and fro /Like a sea-wave, betwixt the world and [Apollo]" (ll. 230-231, 435-436).

[188] "The Garden of Proserpine," ll. 59-60, *Poems*, I, 171.

[189] *Complete Works*, XVI, 360 and 362.

[190] The speaker of Dolores is, Swinburne indicates in the *Notes* (Ibid., 360), "foiled in love"; and in the poem itself the speaker suggests that love is more bitter than lust (see ll. 33-40, 155 and ll. 80-88, 157). Similarly, the speaker of the "Hymn to Proserpine" is also reacting to the fact that "love hath an end" (l. 1, 67) and that "love grows bitter with treason" (l. 38, 69).

[191] "The Triumph of Time," l. 4, *Poems*, I, 34. All subsequent references to the poem in this section of the chapter will be included in the text.

[192] The word "dream" occurs throughout the poem. See, for instance, ll. 12, 49 and 50, 108, 129. It usually marks some sort of break in thought, often the speaker's movement back to the present reality. The world of reality is seen by the speaker as that of the sea, as lines 49-64 and 35-36 indicate. Here he says that he has "put days and dreams out of mind" and that what is now clear is the shore and the sea before him.

[193] Wendell Stacy Johnson, *Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry*, 101.

[194] These lines are particularly reminiscent of *Epipsychidion*, where love lulls "Grief asleep" (l. 67). In the same passage, the poet sees his beloved as "A Star /Which moves not in the moving heavens" (l. 60-61); correspondingly, in Swinburne's poem the lovers would have "stood as the sure stars stand" (l. 41, 35). The primary conception of love as the union of souls is expressed in *Epipsychidion* in the following passage:

> We shall become the same, we shall be one
> Spirit within two frames, ah! wherefore two?
> One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
> Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
> These spheres instinct with it become the same,
> Touch, mingle, and are transfigured. (ll. 573-578)

[195] McGann, *Swinburne*, 213, also notes this Biblical echo and suggests that "[w]hat the snake falsely promised to Adam and Eve would have come true for Swinburne's lovers." It is my suggestion, however, that it is a false paradise.

[196] The prosody of "The Triumph of Time" is that of *Atalanta in Calydon*.

[197] Donald C. Stuart, "Swinburne: The Composition of a

Self-Portrait," VP, 9 (1971), 112, notes the influence of both works -- and of the "monodrama" (as it was later called), Maud. Ricks points out in his edition of The Poems of Tennyson, 688, that Templeman first pointed out the similarities between Sartor Resartus and "Locksley Hall" in the Booker Memorial Studies, 1950.

[198] "Locksley Hall," ll. 37-38, 40, and 65, ed. Ricks, 691 and 692. (The situations are not entirely parallel, of course.)

[199] See ll. 40-54 and 59-62, ed. Ricks, 692, in particular.

[200] Valency, In Praise of Love, 126. Swinburne also wrote a poem on "The Death of Rudel," Complete Works, I, 74-77. Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, I, 146, also mentions a second poem entitled "Rudel in Paradise."

[201] See lines 89-96, 37, where he says that he would die "for the least word said" and lines 183-186, 40, where he proclaims she is "without pity." This is Romantic, as well: as we have seen, the Romantics (particularly Keats in "La Belle Dame") often employ the courtly love tradition to express their longing for the unobtainable ideal.

[202] Complete Works, XVI, 361.

[203] The same sentiment is put forward in "Félise," Poems, I, 194-197. Here the speaker says to the woman (who now wants his love) that her prayers will not be answered. Although "By many a name of many a creed" the gods have been invoked by man, they remain silent:

Behold, there is no grief like this;
  The barren blossom of thy prayer,
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.
  O fools and blind, what seek ye there
  High up in the air?

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
  Merciful gods, compassionate,
And these shall answer you again.
  Will ye beat always at the gate,
  Ye fools of fate?

These stanzas are close to those in Empedocles which Swinburne quoted with approval in his review of Arnold's poems. It should also be remembered that Swinburne told William Michael Rossetti in a letter that "Félise" was close to his own position.

[204] There are also some similarities between the original Romantic conception of love and this desire to drown beneath the waves. Both are "worlds" away from the "woven raiment of nights and days" (l. 281, 43) -- as is the realm of the high gods itself (l. 255, 42) -- and both are protected states, one "clothed" with the wings of Love (l. 39, 35) and the other "Clear of the whole world, hidden at home, /Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam" (ll. 285-286, 43). These

similarities tend to support the contention here that the speaker's original desire is also a negative one.

[205] See also lines 377-379, 46 -- although these lines are perhaps more the resignation of a Prufrock figure.

[206] That this desire is part of the "dream" and not the "reaction" to its loss is suggested by the fact that this passage is followed by the same abrupt break as was the first expression of the dream. Compare line 49, "I have put my days and dreams out of my mind," with line 129, "Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight." The "dream" and the reaction to it do, however, merge: the language here (specifically, "clothed" and "out of the world's way") echoes that of both the Romantic dream of love and the desire to merge with the sea; all are negative reactions to existence, and a joyful acceptance of reality is not achieved by the speaker. The desire for union with the beloved through death is present in both an early version of Epipsychidion and "Locksley Hall":

> If day should part us night will mend division
> And if sleep part us -- we will meet in vision
> And if life part us -- we will mix in death
> Yielding our mite [?] of unreluctant breath.
>
> Shelley: Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 429-430.

And:

> Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
> Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.
>
> "Locksley Hall," ll. 57-58, ed. Ricks, 629.

It is also the mood of the speaker in the poem which follows "The Triumph of Time," "Les Noyades."

[207] Even his allusion to Rudel is sparked by the sea which he gazes upon as he speaks: the sea reminds him of Rudel's last trip across the ocean to the Countess of Tripoli.

[208] These forms may seem too diverse to group, but they are all associated with some kind of transcendent principle and therefore with the dualism of heaven and earth, soul and body. Artemis, as we have seen, is associated with a kind of Olympian theism as well as with Romantic optimism. Swinburne does not entirely equate Romanticism with the transcendent impulse, but he does suggest that the Romantics sometimes envisioned the establishment of a changeless unity of heaven on earth.

[209] Venus is often given the proportions of Hertha and opposed to Mary, the symbol of the religion which Swinburne rejected. However, the speakers of the Venus poems are still bound to some degree to that religion and see Venus as the body alone.

[210] See lines 347-359, 165. She is also identified with Artemis as the virginal moon-goddess (l. 358, 165). It is also interesting to note in this context that Sibylla Palmifera, Rossetti's "ideal and inaccessible beauty" is surrounded by the poppy and the rose, the "twin emblems of love and death." See Complete Works, XV, 213, also quoted in Chapter One.

[211] Complete Works, XI, 101. See also "Libitina Verticordia," Poems, VI, 234. Gunther Zuntz, Persephone (Oxford, 1971), 174, notes: "The age of Romanticism was better attuned than our own to appreciate a concept of the unity of Death and Love than is ours. One of its sons, Ed. Gerhard, wrote a long essay on Venus Proserpina [1852] in which he brought together the literary and archeological evidence for a personal union of the two goddesses." As Kerényi points out, both Artemis and Aphrodite have characteristics in common with Proserpine. Behind all of them is the Great Goddess. See Jung and Kerényi, Introduction to a Science of Mythology, 150, 178 and 198, in particular.

[212] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xvi.

[213] See above and, in particular, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, ed. Clive, 537. To Nietzsche, Romanticism is primarily decadence, but Swinburne does not make this equation.

[214] Swinburne's Venus poems do not directly focus on the desire for a voluptuous drowning, but his comments on the inverted asceticism of de Sade apply here, and such poems as "Les Noyades" can be considered as part of the Venus group.

[215] Or, it may be added, that Swinburne's own pantheistic position is implicit in many of the Venus and Proserpine poems, as Humphrey Hare suggests in Swinburne: A Biographical Approach, 146.

[216] Nietzsche traces a process of "emancipation" which is in some respects similar to the process in Swinburne's "monodrame." The first stage in the process is much like that depicted in Swinburne's "Dolores." See Human, All Too Human, I, ed. Clive, 100.

[217] "Hesperia," 11. 60 and 72, Poems, I, 176 and 177. All subsequent references to the poem in this section of the chapter will be included in the text itself.

[218] Here Swinburne points directly to the connection between Venus and Proserpine discussed above. The myrtle is, of course, sacred to Venus and the poppy to Proserpine; but, as Lemprière suggests, A Classical Dictionary, 14th ed. (London, 1827), 807, the poppy is also linked with Venus and, as Kerényi notes (An Introduction to the Science of Mythology, 193), the myrtle is linked with Proserpine. Swinburne had already reversed the symbolic implications of the myrtle in a passage in "Dolores" which is also reminiscent of this section of "Hesperia" in several other respects: here, the cypress is given to love and the "myrtle to death" (11. 175-176, 159).

[219] Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 362; see also "Hesperia," 11. 72 and 74, 177.

[220] Comus, 11. 982-983, John Milton: Complete Poems, ed. M. Hughes (New York, 1957), 113.

[221] Apollodorus, The Library, II, V, ii, ed. Sir James George Frazer (London and New York, 1921), I, 220-221. Apollodorus also names four goddesses instead of three.

[222] See John Armstrong, The Paradise Myth (London, 1969), 15-21, for an account of the myth of Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree and the similarities between it and the Greek account of Hercules and the golden apples, and of Jason and the golden fleece.

[223] Smith, Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, III, 204. According to Robert Graves, Proserpine is herself one of the "Daughters of the West" who give Hercules the bough of the golden apples. The White Goddess (New York, 1966), 257.

[224] The apple is sacred to Venus and to Proserpine. Graves suggests in The White Goddess, 258, that the apple represents Venus' planet.

[225] "The Hesperides," 1. 82, ed. Ricks, 427; In Memoriam, CXXI and XCV, ed. Ricks, 972 and 947.

[226] Eos is often considered to be the mother of the winds; see Apollodorus, The Library, I, II, 4, ed. Sir James George Frazer, I, 13; and Robert Graves, The Greek Myths (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972), I, 149-150. She also weeps tears of dew for Memnon; see Graves, The Greek Myths, II, 315.

[227] Graves, The Greek Myths, I, 149.

[228] Complete Works, XVI, 361-362.

[229] Morse Peckham, Victorian Revolutionaries, 282. A thorough analysis of "Hesperia" has not yet appeared, even though its importance as the final act in Swinburne's "monodrame" of the spirit has been recognized.

[230] The goddess who destroys is depicted as the snake. See lines 61-70, 176-177. For a thorough discussion of Swinburne's concept of the "holy" see Chapter Seven.

[231] As was suggested in Chapter One, Shelley's poem does not depict the desire to escape from life but the achievement, symbolized by the earthly paradise - woman image, of imaginative vision, in which the real and the ideal are perceived as one. As this vision seemed more and more impossible and divorced from reality, it became a kind of Calypso island of escape.

[232] Russell Goldfarb's remarks on the sexual implications of Browning's "The Last Ride Together" may be applied here. See Sexual Repression and Victorian Literature (Lewisburg, Pa., 1970), 66-81. In Swinburne, however, it is a metaphor for union with the forces of nature.

[233] C.G. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, tr. R.F.C. Hull (London, 1956) and Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949; Cleveland and New York, 1966).

[234] See Jung, Symbols of Transformation, particularly 218 and 249, where Igdrasil itself is mentioned.

[235] Ibid., 215 and 289 for the symbol of the bird; 278 for the wind; 279 for the flame; and 288 and 291 for the arrow. All of these symbols are usually intermingled and are also associated with the horse.

[236] See Ibid., 296-301 particularly.

[237] Horses are also associated with the anima and the Mother. See Ibid., 274-275 and 421. Jung notes, as well, that Igdrasil is associated with the horse; see also Graves, The White Goddess, 57 and 168.

[238] Anna Belford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology (Evanston, 1971), 159. The speaker here takes up horses of "fear" and "love" and Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 249, suggests that riding is associated with both fear and sexuality.

[239] "Prelude," Poems, II, 3. The same movement from love to lust is described in the stanza beginning, "Play then and sing," Poems, II, 6, quoted in full at the beginning of the chapter. In "Hesperia" the same idea is conveyed in much the same imagery: see lines 47-52, 176. Hesperia herself is a "manifold flower" (l. 21, 174), "Paler and sweeter than leaves that cover the blush of the bud" (l. 42, 175). Once again, the idea that she is what remains through experience of his youthful dream of innocence is suggested.

[240] "Prelude," Poems, II, 4 and 78.

Chapter IV

[1] Wendell Stacy Johnson, Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry, 91.

[2] Ibid., 97 and 91.

[3] Ibid., 103.

[4] Ibid., 93 and 98-99.

[5] Ibid., 100.

[6] Johnson does not discuss "Hesperia" at all and only mentions one of these later nature poems, "The Lake of Gaube." He considers it another example of the desire for death through drowning expressed in what we have called the Proserpine poems (100).

[7] "A Nympholept," he says (*Letters*, VI, 153) is "one of the best and most representative things I ever did." See *Letters*, VI, 188, for his comments on "The Lake of Gaube."

[8] T.S. Eliot, "Swinburne as Poet," *The Sacred Wood* (1920; reprinted London, 1953), 149, 147 and 146.

[9] Ibid., 149 and 148.

[10] Edward Thomas, *Algernon Charles Swinburne* (1912), 164; Arthur Symons, "Algernon Charles Swinburne," in *Figures of Several Centuries* (1916), 193; and Ezra Pound, "Swinburne versus Biographers," *Poetry*, 11 (1917), 328.

[11] Robert E. Lougy, "Swinburne's Poetry and Twentieth-Century Criticism," *Dalhousie Review*, 48 (1968), 360.

[12] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 133-134.

[13] Ibid., 132. McGann's description of Swinburne's "tonal harmony and uniform technique" is also relevant here (*Swinburne*, 73). Rosenberg also talks of Swinburne's use of words as "supporting note[s] in a chord of colour. Hence his intentional bland diction, and his overfondness for generalized modifiers" (134) and his use of simple, often-repeated images.

[14] Rosenberg, 133.

[15] See Peters, *The Crowns of Apollo*, 145; and Lougy, "Swinburne and Twentieth-Century Criticism," 361.

[16] Lougy, 362. Neither Eliot nor Pound, it should be noted, entirely condemns Swinburne's style. Eliot suggests that his "diffuseness is one of his glories" (145). And Pound merely notes that the "emotional fusion of perceptions" is the "most dangerous" sort of writing to an author (328); he also singles out several of the "fine passages, like fragments of fine marble statues" in Swinburne's work (329).

[17] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 134, note.

[18] As Rosenberg points out, 131, Keats himself maintained that the poet must have "distinctness for his luxury."

[19] Neville Rogers, *Shelley at Work*, 24.

[20] "Notes on the Text of Shelley," *Complete Works*, XV, 380 (emphasis his). McGann also quotes these lines, noting as well that there is a "suggestive echo of one of Mallarmé's most important statements on poetry. 'I am inventing a language that must necessarily spring from a very new poetics, which I could define in these few words: to paint, not the thing, but the effect it produces.'" (*Swinburne*, 78)

[21] *Complete Works*, XV, 109.

[22] Complete Works, XIV, 301.

[23] Complete Works, XV, 380.

[24] Complete Works, XIV, 242-243.

[25] Complete Works, XV, 126-127.

[26] "John Ford," Complete Works, XII, 400. Byron, of course, was too often deficient in "external music."

[27] See "Byron," Complete Works, XV, 126, for example. More specifically, Swinburne considers Wordsworth to be a poet of human "pathos," as he says in both "Matthew Arnold's New Poems," XV, 87, and "Wordsworth and Byron," XIV, 219.

[28] Swinburne uses this last phrase to describe what Hugo's poetry has, Complete Works, XIII, 173.

[29] "[W]hen least meditative with any prepense or prefixed purpose," Swinburne adds. "Wordsworth and Byron," Complete Works, XIV, 231.

[30] "Notes on the Text of Shelley," Complete Works, XV, 379.

[31] Connolly, for instance, quotes both passages when he is describing Swinburne's conception of "internal music," Swinburne's Theory of Poetry, 68 and 71-72. He also suggests that the passage from "John Ford" quoted above is an anticipation of the term "harmony" (ignoring here the fact that harmony includes external music). It is actually the definition of the poet of "positive passion."

[32] George H. Ford, Keats and the Victorians (1944; reprinted London, 1962) shows the importance of Keats to the Pre-Raphaelites and outlines their similarities. Lafourcade, Swinburne's Hyperion and Other Poems: With an Essay on Swinburne and Keats (London, 1927) shows the relative lack of importance of Keats to Swinburne and outlines their poetic differences.

[33] Like Mazzini, Ruskin considers art "a link between heaven and earth." Quoted by Patricia M. Ball, The Science of Aspects (London, 1971), 71, who considers the remark "central to Modern Painters."

[34] Quoted by Josephine Miles, Pathetic Fallacy in the Nineteenth Century (1942; reprinted London, 1965), 106.

[35] Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. Shawcross, II, 257.

[36] Modern Painters, V, ix, Chapter I, section 8, The Works of John Ruskin, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London, 1909), VII, 258.

[37] Pre-Raphaelitism, section 22, Works, XII, 358.

[38] "Pre-Raphaelitism," Architecture and Painting, Chapter IV, section 135, Works, XII, 159.

[39] "The Royal Academy," section 283, Works, XIV, 107. As Landow also suggests in The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin (Princeton, 1971), 72, for Ruskin "imagination" is the intuitive perception of essential and spiritual truth. However, as the comments quoted here indicate, Ruskin also associates imagination with artistic instinct and technique. Lack of essential visionary power or lack of emotion and work on a minute scale all seem to betray a lack of imagination. Here Ruskin is much like Swinburne.

[40] Ruskin, quoted by John D. Rosenberg, The Darkening Glass (New York and London, 1961), 30 and 29. His account of Ruskin's loss of faith is an excellent one.

[41] Letters, I, 202. Ruskin's term is "microscopic dissection," "Pre-Raphaelitism," section 22, Works, XII, 359.

[42] Swinburne, quoted by Peters, The Crowns of Apollo, 82-83. Peters' chapter "On Fixities and Definites: The Use of Detail in Art" is a thorough treatment of this whole subject. Once again, and much like Ruskin, Swinburne's preference pertains to the depiction of the larger effects of nature and to a certain interrelated visionary "sense of things."

[43] Swinburne's frequent use of "gem" and "carven goddess" imagery to describe Rossetti's work is perhaps indicative of the difference between Rossetti's harmony and Shelley's.

[44] Letters, VI, 152, note.

[45] See Letters, III, 11 and Chew, Swinburne, 98.

[46] "Percy Bysshe Shelley," Complete Works, XV, 336-337.

[47] Ibid., 343. (Here Swinburne also mentions Shelley's achievement of the "joyous observation" and the "serious rapture of meditation" which are elsewhere associated with Keats at his best and with Wordsworth at his best.) In a letter, it may be added, Swinburne also compares Turner and Shelley: he mentions an evening sky which could only have been described by Shelley and painted by Turner (Letters, V, 254).

[48] Frye, A Study of English Romanticism, 94.

[49] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 148-149. Other critics suggest a connection between Swinburne and Turner but do not explore it. Among them are: Paul de Reul, L'Oeuvre de Swinburne, 219, and E.K. Brown, "Swinburne: A Centenary Estimate," UTQ, 6 (1937), 215.

[50] Included in Letters, I, 182. Ruskin's metaphor is, interestingly, linked with that with which he describes nature (see above).

[51] "Pre-Raphaelitism," sections 21-24, Works, XII, 359-361. Here, Ruskin credits Millais with "imagination": after describing a painter who has "excessively keen sight" and patiently transcribes the details of nature and a painter who is "comparatively near-sighted" and renders the large effects of nature, he adds, if "inventive power" were given to the first, that painter would be Millais and if "the eye of an eagle" were given to the second he would be Turner. Ruskin's point is that there are different types of perception and of "innate genius." The difference is what Swinburne would call "internal music," and the distinction between Millais and Turner is that which he makes between Keats at his best and Shelley.

[52] The description is Peters', in The Crowns of Apollo, 128. Peters himself thinks that Swinburne "retained much of Shelley's dualism," but suggests that "there is a static quality in Shelley's theory absent from Swinburne's; Shelley's beauty seems, despite the ubiquitous images of wind, veil, and light, invented to convey its power, somewhat too fixed in its transcendent abode, serene and remote among its clouds and trophies."

[53] Discussing Prometheus Bound, Frye affirms that Shelley "ignore[s] most of what seems to us the real inner process of nature, the cruelty and ruthless fight to survive which impresses us so deeply in this post-Darwinian age . . . ." He does point out, however, that Keats did attempt to include "an eternal fierce destruction" in his vision of nature. A Study of English Romanticism, 115 and 161.

[54] Lougy also suggests that Swinburne not only accepted the "post-Darwinian view of nature" but also "incorporated it into his poetry." "Swinburne's Poetry and Twentieth-Century Criticism," 363.

[55] "Byron," Complete Works, XV, 126. Here Swinburne is referring specifically to "Ode to the West Wind" and the famous passages on nature in Childe Harold, canto IV.

[56] Ibid., 128. Swinburne continues on to suggest here that when Byron is "confronted" with the elements, "his scorn of men caught in the nets of nature and necessity has no alloy of untruth; his spirit is mingled with the sea's, and overlooks with a superb delight the ruins, and prayers of men."

[57] Complete Works, XVI, 396.

[58] Clymene is not only the mother of Phaëthon by Apollo but also the daughter of Oceanus and a Nereid; and Leucothea is not only Apollo's beloved, who is transformed into a tree, but Athamas' wife (who is changed into a sea deity).

[59] Complete Works, XIII, 29. See also his description of the sea poems in Toute La Lyre, Ibid., 348-359.

[60] Peters, The Crowns of Apollo, 154. As suggested previously, both Peters and Connolly tend to link Swinburne's conception of

"external" and "internal music" and the resulting "harmony" too exclusively to Swinburne's conception of nature and man's relationship with her.

[61] Complete Works, XIII, 216.

[62] Ibid., 217.

[63] In the opening scene of L'Homme Qui Rit, Swinburne suggests, Hugo achieves sublimity in a scene which could have been merely terrible. However, the "rhythmic horror of the thing penetrates us not with loathing, but with a tragic awe and terror as at a real piece of the wind's work, an actual piece of the night's, a portion of the tempest of things."

[64] "John Webster," Complete Works, XI, 295; also quoted by Peters, 161.

[65] New Writings of Swinburne, ed. Lang, 72; Swinburne alludes to Rizpah in one of his essays on Hugo, as well, Complete Works, XIII, 131. Other examples which could be mentioned here include his description of the art of Shakespeare: unlike the "material ocean,"

> the limits of that other ocean, the laws of its tides, the motive of its forces, the mystery of its unity and the secret of its change, no seafarer of us may ever think thoroughly to know. No wind-gauge will help us to the science of its storms, no lead-line sound for us the depths of its divine and terrible serenity. (Complete Works, XI, 3)

Chapman, who attempted "oceanic verse" could only achieve the "volcanic": his verse

> can show but the huge movements of the heaving earth, inflated and inflamed with unequal and violent life, for the innumerable unity and harmony, the radiant and buoyant music of luminous motion, the simplicity and equality of passion and of power, the majestic monochord of single sound underlying as it were at the heart of Homeric verse the multitudinous measures of the epic sea. (Complete Works, XII, 228-229)

[66] Complete Works, XIII, 206-207. Here we have a repetition of the description of the poetry of Shelley and Byron, in which "description melts into passion and contemplation takes fire from delight," this time in terms of the individual's response to poetry and nature. It should also be noted that the scene which Swinburne describes is not all storm. There is a "space of clear sky . . ., a splendid semi-circle of too intense purity to be called blue" and in this space "midway between the storm and the sea hung the motionless full moon; Artemis watching with serene splendour of scorn the battle of the Titans and revels of the nymphs, from her stainless and Olympian summit of divine indifferent light." This aspect of the scene perhaps symbolizes Hugo's own faith in a transcendent principle.

[67] See, for instance, his comments on Salome and the woman's head drawn three times by Michaelangelo, quoted in Chapter I. Swinburne

says of Michaelangelo's works generally:

> Their tragic beauty, their inexplicable strength and wealth of thought, their terrible and exquisite significance, all the powers they unveil and all the mysteries they reserve, all their suggestions and all their suppressions, are at first adorable merely. Delightful beyond words they become in time, as the subtler and weightier work of Aeschylus or Shakespeare; but unlike these they first fill and exalt the mind with a strange and violent pleasure which is the highest mood of worship. . . . The least thought of these men has in it something intricate and enormous, faultless as the formal work of their triumphant art must be.

Yet, "the sorrow and strangeness of things are not lessened because to one or two their secret springs have been laid bare and the courses of their tides made known; refluent evil and good, alternate grief and joy, life inextricable from death, change inevitable and insuperable fate." (*Complete Works*, XV, 158) The dark lady of Hugo's *L'Homme Qui Rit*, it is interesting to note, is described with reference to Aeschylus and the sea-wind: "We seem to hear about her the beat and clash of the terrible timbrels, the music that Aeschylus set to verse, the music that made mad, the upper notes of the psalm shrill and strong as a sea-wind . . . ." (*Complete Works*, XIII, 213)

[68] See his comments on the Muse of various writers, quoted in Chapter I.

[69] *Poems and Ballads*, *Poems*, I, 70; and *Songs before Sunrise*, *Poems*, II, 97.

[70] The chorus of both Greek dramas, *Atalanta* and *Erechtheus*, use this image. See *Poems*, IV, 275 and 412 in particular.

[71] See *Poems*, I, 71-72; IV, 273-274; and I, 42-44.

[72] Line 115, *Poems*, II, 76.

[73] *Poems*, III, 29. Rosenberg also quotes this last verse, suggesting that it "might have come from Turner's own catalogue descriptions of his seascapes" ("Swinburne," 148). As he notes generally, "Drifting clouds, waves, gulls, wind, the earth's margins . . . are the phenomena on which Swinburne's senses instinctually fixed, the background of earth against which his people stand, dwarfed and apart." The poems of lost love like "At a Month's End" will be mentioned in Chapter VI.

[74] *Poems*, III, 326; V, 189; and III, 84.

[75] All three poems mentioned here are also based upon Swinburne's personal experiences: "Ex-Voto" is based upon Swinburne's near-drowning at Etretât (see *Letters*, I, 309, note); and "In Guernsey" and "The Garden of Cymodoce" commemorate visits to Guernsey and Sark (see *Letters*, V, 22 and IV, 142).

[76] "L'Homme Qui Rit," *Complete Works*, XIII, 207, also quoted

above. Similarly, the elements of nature give Shelley and Byron "no less sensual pleasure than spiritual sustenance." The forces are "desired as others desire music or wine or the beauty of women"; in their poetry "description melts into passion and contemplation takes fire from delight." Complete Works, XV, 127, quoted above.

[77] This expression, or variations of it, occurs throughout Swinburne's work, particularly in "Tristram of Lyonesse."

[78] Poems, VI, 280 and 281. All subsequent references to this work in Chapter IV will be included in the text itself.

[79] Poems, III, 328. Hugo himself is also identified with the sun (see Chapter VII).

[80] Letters, IV, 296. He needs the scenery in particular to compensate for his disappointment over the absence of Hugo.

[81] Poems, III, 254-255. Inchbold's own landscape paintings, it is interesting to note, are compared by Swinburne with Turner's. See Letters, V, 258.

[82] As Lang maintains, "In Memory of John William Inchbold" recalls the experience of riding horses at night near Tintagel, described with great enthusiasm in a letter dated September 2, 1864 (Letters, I, 105-107). Although it is usually maintained that "Hesperia," probably written in 1865, is based on Swinburne's rides with Mary Gordon in 1863 on the Isle of Wight (see Fuller, Swinburne, 121-122, for example), the scene in "Hesperia" is actually very close to that described in this letter. The letter is written to Mary Gordon herself, and begins by wishing that she could have accompanied him on his ride by the sea at night. Mary, Mrs. Disney Leith, refers to this letter herself in her book, The Boyhood of Algernon Charles Swinburne: Personal Recollections by His Cousin (London, 1917), 21.

[83] "Northumberland," Poems, VI, 346 and 347. Swinburne's ancestors had been situated in Caphaeton since the thirteenth century, and Swinburne considered the residence of his beloved grandfather, Sir John, to be his home. His love for the Northumberland country may be seen in his interest in Border Ballads and in Mary Stuart (whom his ancestors supported).

[84] Letters, IV, 297.

[85] "In the Water," Poems, VI, 19. The phrase "strike out for the shore" is also present in his critical comments on other writers, as we have seen, and recurs in his poetry.

[86] They all, of course, have the same essential significance and are often intermingled, as in "A Channel Passage." In "Grace Darling," a poem commemorating the brave Northumberland spirit, the image of the ship and the seamew are even more directly mingled. See Poems, VI, 166. Similarly, as we will see, the image of the swimmer and of the

seamew are mingled in "The Lake of Gaube."

[87] Poems, III, 301 and 307; 236; 328, and 335. In another personal poem, "At a Month's End," the seamew and the northern landscape are identified with his own sense of life and contrasted with the panther and the southern landscape, symbols of the sense of life of his beloved (III, 30-33. Both "Thalassius" and "At a Month's End" will be discussed in Chapter VI.) In two dedicatory poems (III, [293] and [339]) his verses are likened to seamews. For other references to the seamew see: "On the Cliffs" (III, 324), "Off Shore" (V, 50), "The Seaboard" of "A Midsummer Holiday" (VI, 6), "Les Casquets" (VI, 47), and, as mentioned above, "The Lake of Gaube" (VI, 286).

[88] In addition to the lines quoted above from "At a Month's End" (III, 29), and "In the Water" of "A Midsummer Holiday" (VI, 19-20) see: "The Garden of Cymodoce" (III, 326), "Ex-Voto" (III, 82), "In Guernsey" (V, 189), "A Word With the Wind"(III, 235), and "Loch Torridon" (VI, 172). The last poem presents the idea in a comprehensive fashion:

> The sea, that harbours in her heart sublime
> The supreme heart of music deep as time,
> And in her spirit strong
> The spirit of all imaginable song.

[89] Poems, III, 211; and Letters, VI, 252.

[90] As McGann also notes, Swinburne, 146, "The body of the poem is arranged in a series of stanzas which, besides scattering Shelleyan allusions, recalls the sequential pattern of 'To a Skylark.'" As we will see in Chapter VII, the nightingale is also an important symbol for Swinburne; here, however, he seems to be referring to Keats' symbol.

[91] Poems, III, 213.

[92] Ibid., 211.

[93] Ibid., 212 and 214.

[94] Ibid., 212.

[95] Ibid., 211. The seamew is associated with man's early joy in the face of terrifying nature (as is also suggested in "A Channel Passage"); but it is also associated with the recovery of such a state.

[96] Ibid., 212-213.

[97] Ibid., 211 and 212.

[98] Ibid., 213.

[99] Ibid., 212 and 214.

[100] Ibid., 214. As he says, 213,

> The sense or soul half-hidden

In thee, for us forbidden,
Bids thee nor change nor languish,
  But live thy life as here,
More high than wrath or anguish,
  More strong than pride or fear.

[101] The Athenaeum, 2777 (15 January, 1881), 92. Here he is speaking specifically of "Off Shore" and of "Thalassius."

[102] "Wordsworth and Byron," Complete Works, XIV, 215.

[103] McGann, Swinburne, 170.

[104] Ibid., 41.

[105] Ibid., 157. McGann presents a summary of many of the devices he pointed to when analyzing individual poems on pages 149-159.

[106] Ibid., 156.

[107] As McGann notes, 137, Randolph Hughes (Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Centenary Survey, 18) turns Swinburne's own phrase "into a critical concept of general significance for Swinburne's verse techniques."

[108] Ibid., 171.

[109] Ibid., 172.

[110] Poems, I, 175 and III, 21.

[111] "Tiresias," Poems, II, 178; also quoted by McGann, 171.

[112] These representative passages are selected by McGann, Swinburne, 171-172.

[113] Ibid., 177.

[114] Ibid., 111.

[115] See Chapter III. There is a difference, however, as the general process in Swinburne does not entail a complete immersion in unity through death but only a communication with nature and the deepest self.

[116] Poems, IV, 284.

[117] Ibid., 289, also quoted in Chapter III. The lines themselves, it may be noted, also ring with discursive authority.

[118] "Hymn of Man," Poems, II, 104. The imagery here is that which predominates in the later nature poems: love, song, wind, and bird.

[119] "On the Downs," Poems, II, 195.

[120] "An Autumn Vision," Poems, VI, 152-153. In "A Channel Passage" itself the scene is also linked with the "word" of earth:

> The glory beholden of man in a vision, the music of light overheard,
> The rapture and radiance of battle, the life that abides in the fire of a word,
> In the midmost heaven enkindled, was manifest far on the face of the sea. (VI, 281)

In "An Autumn Vision," the vision is directly associated with Shakespeare, just as it is associated indirectly with Hugo in "A Channel Passage" and directly with him in "The Garden of Cymodoce." See Chapter VII.

[121] "The Eve of Revolution," Songs before Sunrise, Poems, II, 12.

[122] See "Monotones" of Songs before Sunrise, Poems, II, 219-220.

[123] As McGann says, Swinburne, 116, "Silence is praised because too much of man's ordinary speech merely interferes with the eloquence of the world, which is a speaking picture were man only attentive to its voices. The babble of individual egos confuses the speech of existence." (McGann, it should be noted, tends to interpret the chorus of Atalanta in a different fashion.)

[124] Poems, III, 211. Later on in the poem, 213, Swinburne suggests that the "Sense or soul half hidden" of the seamew is "More high than wrath or anguish, /More strong than pride or fear."

[125] Poems, VI, 6. This passage also supports the idea that Swinburne is "not a traveller," as McGann (174) suggests, and not involved in linear and progressive thought usually associated with masculine consciousness.

[126] Ibid., [5].

[127] McGann, 178; Eliot, "Swinburne as Poet," 148, quoted above.

[128] Poems, III, 35; quoted by McGann, 178.

[129] Poems, III, 238 and 254.

[130] Poems, VI, 146.

[131] Poems, II, 3 and 4.

[132] Poems, II, 194.

[133] The following lines (192) make the connection quite apparent:

> Scarce wind enough was on the sea,
> Scarce hope enough there moved in me[.]

Like Coleridge in "Dejection: An Ode," the speaker gazes on the scene "with blank unspeculative eyes."

[134] See Ibid., 195-196.

[135] Ibid., 192.

[136] See the opening of "Evening on the Broads," V, 59, for example.

[137] "Neap Tide," and "A Word With the Wind," III, 235 and 238.

[138] Poems, VI, 172-173.

[139] Ibid., 173.

[140] "A Midsummer Holiday," Poems, VI, 6, quoted above.

[141] "Loch Torridon," Poems, VI, 174.

[142] Ibid., 175.

[143] Ibid., 176-177.

[144] "Off Shore," Poems, V, 46.

[145] Ibid., 47.

[146] Ibid., 46. In "On the Downs," the process is internalized: "thought's soundless stream" "flows through gloom and gleam" (II, 194, quoted above, emphasis mine).

[147] Poems, VI, 47. This prisoner imagery is also present in many poems.

[148] The poem opens with an evocation to Venus: "Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter, /Fair and flawless from face to feet," Poems, VI, 159.

[149] As Swinburne says, "Dawn and even and noon are one," VI, 160. He blends heaven and earth and dawn and sunset less directly in the following lines: "Cloud on cloud, though the wind be veering /Heaped on high to the sundawn's gate (160); and, "Toward the sunset's goal the sunless waters crowd" (161).

[150] Ibid., VI, 160 and 161. The final two lines in the second quotation blend the states of strife and rest and suggest their ultimate equivalence.

[151] Ibid., 163.

[152] Ibid., 162.

[153] Ibid., 163.

[154] "Hesperia," Poems, I, 174. It is also interesting to note

that the revival of love is described here in much the same images as the spirit's revival in "On the Downs" and that the undersea imagery of "Off Shore" is also present:

> And my heart yearns, baffled and blind, moved vainly towards thee, and moving
> As the refluent seaweed moves in the languid exuberant stream,
> Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under water in prison,
> That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse of the sea,
> Closed up from the air and the sun, but alive, as a ghost rearisen,
> Pale as the love that revives as a ghost rearisen in me. (174-175)

[155] In "In Guernsey," the swimmer dives down into Dante's hell -- a suggestion which Frye, who presents Romantic mythology as an inversion of traditional mythic structures, would perhaps appreciate: "On Dante's track by some funereal spell /Drawn down through desperate ways that lead not back /We seem to move" (Ibid, V, 190).

[156] McGann, Swinburne, 177. Here McGann concentrates on the sleep-trance of such poems as "Sestina" and does not discuss such poems as "A Channel Passage" in which active and joyful participation in the flux is presented.

[157] Leone Vivante, English Poetry and Its Contribution to the Knowledge of a Creative Principle (New York, 1950), 264.

[158] As Vivante says, 272, "indeterminacy" and "form" are "represented as two aspects of one principle, each enhancing the other's meaning . . . ."

[159] "Swinburne's idea of value as immanent -- neither utilitarian, nor conventional, nor transcendental, nor abstractly inferred, but intimately known -- is expressed all through his poems, but in 'Tristram of Lyonesse' most happily . . . ." Ibid., 265; see also, 266-267.

[160] "On the Downs," Poems, II, 195.

[161] Poems, V, 140.

[162] McGann, Swinburne, 155. See also 181-182:

> Swinburne does this [offers "a better view of the only world there is"] by complicating the sets of poetic relations so drastically that the ordinary modes of conscious apprehension are exercised beyond their ordinary strength. When this occurs, if the reading experience is to continue at all, one is engulfed by the poetry, cut off from all external experiences, and sustained (if at all) by a rich and constantly shifting sense of law and the infinitely possible forms of life. . . . He offers not a compensatory but a transformed experience. His art is the practice of a severe aestheticism whose purpose is to empty the reader of worlds he possesses. What is gained in these subtractions and removals is openness, figured as sleep-trance and often experienced in reading

as 'difficulty,' 'vagueness' and a recurring sense of abstraction.

[163] "Prelude," Songs before Sunrise, Poems, II, 4.

[164] See, for instance, "The Commonweal," "The Armada," and "England: an Ode," Poems, III, 174, 187 and VI, 186 respectively.

[165] Poems, V, [84].

[166] "The Lake of Gaube" first appeared in 1899 in The Bookman and then was included in the 1904 collection, A Channel Passage and Other Poems.

[167] The details of Swinburne's 1862 visit to the Cauterets are gathered from various sources by Meredith B. Raymond in "'The Lake of Gaube': Swinburne's Dive into the Dark and 'Indeterminate Moment,'" VP, 9 (1971), 186. Her article and Kerry McSweeney's "Swinburne's 'A Nympholept' and 'The Lake of Gaube'" in the same edition of Victorian Poetry (201-216) are the most thorough treatments of the poem. McSweeney, it should be noted, considers this poem and "A Nympholept" to be central to the concerns of Swinburne's poetry:

> the relation between the mind and the natural world; the strictures and satisfactions of a purely naturalistic view of life; the necessity of discarding all supernatural beliefs, especially those of the Christian; the necessity of man's overcoming his fear of nature's destructiveness and his own inevitable death; and the necessity of accepting the fact that nature's perfect moments, like man's life, are mutable and transitory. (204)

[168] Complete Works, XIII, 320-321; also quoted by Raymond, 187. Raymond does not note that Swinburne refers to the Lake of Gaube in "Song for the Centenary of Walter Savage Landor," Poems, V, 14. Here the "steel-cold" lake is "Deep as dark death and keen as death to smite."

[169] "The Lake of Gaube," Poems, VI, 284. All subsequent references to this work in Chapter IV will be included in the text itself.

[170] McSweeney, 213.

[171] Swinburne uses the same images of flowers and lightning in "A Channel Passage":

> the sky laughed out into light
> From the rims of the storm to the sea's dark edge with flames that
> were flowerlike and white.
> The leaping and luminous blossoms of live sheet lightning that laugh
> as they fade
> From the cloud's black base to the black wave's brim rejoiced in
> the light they made. (VI, 281)

[172] As Raymond puts it (195), quoting Vivante and then Swinburne, the salamander "may be regarded as partaking of the eternal 'core of

causality' while simultaneously he is identified with the 'objective multiplicity' of the 'Flowers dense and keen as midnight stars aflame.'"

[173] Of course, according to ancient belief, recorded by Pliny, the salamander was able to live in fire, which it quenched by the cold of its body. See Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (Amsterdam and London, 1974), 398. According to Paracelsus and then the Rosicrucians, the salamander was the daemon or elemental spirit of fire. Raymond (195, footnote) suggests that Swinburne refers only to its "mythical-alchemical nature" when he suggests it "exults" in fire of the noonshine." However, it should be noted that salamanders do "emerge in misty weather . . . or after thunderstorms [cf. Swinburne's comparison of the salamanders to 'Lightnings whose life outshone their stormlit hour'], when they may appear in enormous numbers in localities where at other times their presence would not be suspected." See *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Cambridge, 1911), XXIV, 58. It should be remembered that the poem is based on an actual experience and that Swinburne draws a distinction between a natural and sympathetic reaction to the creatures and a superstitious fear of them.

[174] Ad de Vries, 395.

[175] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 58.

[176] Robert Penn Warren, "A Poem of Pure Imagination," *Selected Essays*, (New York, 1958), 254, outlines the process of reconciliation in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in a similar fashion; but, equating the light of the imagination only with that of the moon, he does not indicate that in this central moment the opposites associated with both sun and moon are reconciled. The Mariner perceives the beauty of the water-snakes as they move both "Beyond the shadow of the ship," where the moon shines, its beams like "April hoar-frost," and "Within the shadow of the ship," where the influence of the red and burning sun can still be seen. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 272, 268, and 277, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford, 1912), I, 197 and 198.

[177] Coleridge's water-snakes are "*happy* *living things*":

Blue, glossy green and velvet black,
They *coiled and swam*; and every track
Was a *flash* of *golden fire*.

They are linked not only with the heat of the sun but also with the light of the moon and are like stars in the heavens:

They moved in tracks of *shining* white,
And when they reared, the elfish *light*
Fell off in hoary *flakes*.

Swinburne's salamanders are "*living things* of *light* like *flames* of flowers" which happily "*played and laughed*" and now "*glance and flash*." They "*shine* sweet like stars" and in colour are a "deep mild purple flaked with moonbright gold." The double underlining here indicates an exact parallel and the single, close parallels in idea or expression.

[178] Swinburne makes it quite explicit that his dive and swim in the waters is equivalent to the salamander's braving the heat of the sun: Just "as the bright salamander in fire of the moonshine exults and is glad of his day" (285), so Swinburne joyfully dives into the cold waters of the lake. It should be noted here that the salamander is also a symbol of renewal. As Ernest Ingersoll points out in *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore* (New York, 1923), 195-196, the Arabs confused their salamander with the Egyptian phoenix and from the tenth century onward called the phoenix by the Greek term "salamandra."

[179] *Poems*, V, [42]; also quoted by Raymond, 190. Swinburne used this meter in his rendering of the "Grand Chorus of Birds from Aristophanes," also adding in his comment on the poem that the metre "goes ringing at full gallop as of horses who 'dance as 'twere to the music /Their own hoofs make.'" It is also interesting to note that "Hesperia" is written in a similar metre; see Lafourcade's discussion of the poem, *La Jeunesse*, II, 458.

[180] McGann, *Swinburne*, 183.

[181] Vivante, quoted by Raymond, 197 and 198.

[182] Raymond, however, does suggest that it is important. She notes that Vivante's conception of reality is essentially subjective (191) and that he suggests that for Swinburne the "core of causality" is "either above or below, anyhow beyond personality" (quoted, 193). Raymond points out that the "swift emergence of the swimmer to the sunlight to continue his experience represents Swinburne's insistence . . . on the external character of the 'core of causality' . . ." (198) which she identifies with the sun.

[183] Wendell Stacy Johnson suggests that Swinburne expresses his *liebestod* here: "some form of imagined death, whether the burning death in *Atalanta* or the plunge into watery depths in 'The Lake of Gaube,' represents the true consummation of passion, the return to primal unity." *Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry*, 100. Kerry McSweeney also links the dive with death; but he does suggest that the attitude to death here is different than that of "Hymn to Proserpine": "Death is no more a longed-for oblivion, a release from the meaningless imprisonment in mutability. It is rather something intimately a part of man's relation to nature; a culmination, not an escape." "Swinburne's 'A Nympholept and 'The Lake of Gaube,'" 214.

[184] The swimmer "Shoots up as a shaft from the dark depth shot, sped straight into sight of the sun" (286). The primary image is, of course, that of an arrow -- one which is used in "Hesperia" to describe the speaker's triumphant ride through life: "And the sound of [the horses] trampling the way cleaves night as an arrow asunder" (I, 178). However, the suggestion that the "shaft" is associated

with light is reinforced by the equation of the sun with the soul later in the poem. In "Hesperia," the speaker also says, "We burn with the fire of our flight" (I, 178).

[185] As we have seen, the expression "strike out from the shore" is used in Swinburne's prose criticism and in several of the "nature poems."

[186] As he says, again echoing "A Channel Passage," "Whose thought has fathomed and measured /The darkness of life and of death" (286).

[187] Letters, II, 340. This passage is in distinct contrast to the moral of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," as Coleridge's poem is set in a Christian framework.

[188] See McGann, Swinburne, 184-185.

[189] It should be remembered that sunset and dawn are also linked in "Hesperia." Here the questions also, although less directly, link the "peace" of the dive with the "strife" of the swim: "Is the word of them [sunset and dawn] peace, not strife?" (287)

[190] "A Nympholept," Poems, VI, 127. All subsequent references in Chapter IV to this work will be included in the text itself.

[191] Kerry McSweeney notes that the lush and radiant summer landscape of this poem and of the first part of "The Lake of Gaube" contrasts with the "bleak and comfortless landscape" ("Swinburne's 'A Nympholept' and 'The Lake of Gaube,'" 203) of most of Swinburne's "nature poems." However, the same harsh truths are encountered here. It may be added that these two poems may also be contrasted with those poems which use the dominant image of light for a consideration of the symbol of Apollo (see Chapter VII).

[192] Swinburne, quoted by Meredith B. Raymond, Swinburne's Poetics: Theory and Practice (The Hague, 1971), 208.

[193] McGann, Swinburne, 185.

[194] Paull F. Baum, "Swinburne's 'A Nympholept,'" South Atlantic Quarterly, 57 (1958), 62; quoted in part by McGann, 185.

[195] McGann, 187. In addition to the device which Baum had noted, McGann draws attention to another device in the poem: the reversal of common collocations such as in the lines which Eliot (and Thomas before him) had criticized -- "Time, with a gift of tears /Grief with a glass that ran." (See Edward Thomas, Algernon Charles Swinburne, 15-16.) The reversal in this poem refers to the "supreme dim godhead" of nature, who is "Perceived of the soul and conceived of the sense of man." McGann suggests that Swinburne deliberately alters this collocation in order to draw together "spirit and sense": "By reversing the customary relations of the nouns to the verbs here Swinburne suggests a condition where thought and sensation seem merely

the reflecting aspects of a single identical activity. . . . Transformational faculties correspond to a metamorphic universe" (188-189). The reversal may also suggest the relationship between man and his gods (see below).

[196] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xxiii.

[197] Patricia Merivale, Pan the Goat-God, 49. As Merivale notes (61-62), in the Witch of Atlas (stanza IX) Shelley includes both the god and the woman. Merivale quotes Grabo's interpretation of the relationship between the two: "Universal Pan, god of all material substance, feels . . . the influence of the goddess of love and beauty in nature, of her who shapes living forms into the likeness of divine archetypes." This shows, again, that Shelley is a panentheist. Wordsworth and Emerson, it should be added, also have important universal or Orphic Pans.

[198] This Pan is present in Keats, but predominates in the more minor poets of the age.

[199] As Merivale indicates (85-86), this Pan is present, for instance, in Tennyson's In Memoriam and Arnold's 1852 version of "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens." It may be noted that the "past" may be personal or the Romantic age itself.

[200] David J. DeLaura provides a good analysis of the debate in Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold and Pater (Austin, Texas, 1969). Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Dead Pan" was obviously influential in the symbolic juxtaposition of Christ and Pan (see Merivale, 84-85 and 103-118). It is interesting to note that Robert Browning used the same contrast of spiritual and sensual in a more internal and psychological fashion and returned to the tradition of Pan as a symbol of the dual nature of man.

[201] Poems, I, 69 and 71.

[202] Poems, III, 219; also quoted by Merivale, 106, who suggests that his lines "summarized the dispute."

[203] Merivale, particularly 98, 220, and 227.

[204] Merivale, 154; see also 98. Lawrence's Pan, as Merivale suggests (197), is "one attempt" to return to myth, which "re-establishes 'the living organic connections with the cosmos' by way of a 'whole human experience, of which the purpose is too deep, going too deep in the blood and soul, for mental explanation or description.'" This sounds much like Swinburne and, indeed, in "Pan in America" at points Lawrence does seem to have Swinburne's poem in mind. He selects those aspects of Pan which are present in "A Nympholept": Pan is the fearful god who strikes dead "those who should see [him] by daylight"; Pan's silence is" so full of unutterable things," of "soundless sounds"; and before man was "separated off from the universe he was Pan, along with all the rest"

D.H. Lawrence, Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence (London, 1936), 22, 27, 28, and 24. Most tellingly, Lawrence refers to nympholepsy as well: "The man who looked up to see the white arms of a nymph flash . . . followed helplessly. He was a nympholept" (Ibid., 22).

[205] See Merivale, 2, for Theocritus' story and 237, note 4, for a list of Euripides' allusions to Pan. As Merivale indicates (130), Swinburne himself quotes the relevant passage from Theocritus in William Blake. See Letters, V, 209, where he also quotes Theocritus when outlining "Pan and Thalassius."

[206] Merivale, 14, 29, and 97; see "A Nympholept," stanza 5, Poems, VI, 128. It is conceivable that Swinburne was also acquainted with Thomas Taylor's translation of the Orphic Hymn, in which Pan is associated with "immortal fire," "starry light," and "heavenly splendour," and with "dreadful rage," and in which he is asked to "Drive panic Fury" from mankind. Merivale includes Taylor's translation in her "Appendix," 233-234.

[207] See Merivale, 29-31. When discussing Milton's allusions to the darker Pan, Merivale refers only to Paradise Regained (II, 189-191, in particular), which makes the usual equation between the pagan gods and the Christian devils. But there may be another, more indirect, allusion to Pan as the devil in Milton. In commenting on lines 617-621 of Paradise Lost, II, Hughes refers to E.C. Kirkland's suggestion that "Satan's temptation of Eve at high noon (IX, 739) and of Christ at the same hour (PR, II, 292) is connected with the noonday devil (the daemonio meridi, as the Vulgate renders the Hebrew that is translated 'the destruction that wasteth at noonday' in the King James Bible, Psalm xci, 6)." John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Hughes, 273.

[208] Lawrence's comment in "Pan in America" that "the Romantics worshipped nature in her sweet-and-pure aspect, her Lucy Gray aspect" (Phoenix, 22) is in keeping with Swinburne's general comments on the optimism of the Romantics.

[209] See Merivale, 98. She quotes the same passage on Pan in Carlyle's French Revolution that was quoted here in Chapter I and a passage from Stevenson's "Pan's Pipes" which she suggests is close to a passage in "A Nympholept." But Stevenson's essay, as a whole, is less deep and mysterious than Swinburne's poem. His Pan also has a "gleeful . . . look . . . and in every wood . . . you shall hear the note of his pipe." "Pan's Pipes," in "Virginibus Puerisque," The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson, Vailima Edition (London, 1922), II, 197. To the list of contemporary sources which Merivale provides should be added Hugo's "A Albert Durer," which also refers to the dark and mysterious nature of Pan and to the savage beauty of his woods.

[210] Baum, "Swinburne's 'A Nympholept,'" 59. Reul also correctly points to its similarity with the "Hymn of Man" in

L'Oeuvre de Swinburne, 286.

[211] There is also a suggestion here (stanza 20, 134), as in the "Hertha" volume, that Pan should be associated with the Titanic or Promethean powers who battle against the false heavenly gods. In "The Palace of Pan," Poems, VI, 180, Pan is called "the godhead terrene and Titanic." As Merivale points out (109-110), in Hugo's "Le Satyre" Pan is the Titanic force who opposes Jupiter: "Place à Tout! Je suis Pan; Jupiter! à genoux."

[212] See McGann's comment on the line in stanza 15 referred to earlier. See also stanza 1, 127: "Summer, and noon, and a splendour of silence, felt /Seen, and heard of the spirit within the sense." Swinburne is obviously playing with the meanings of "perceive" and "conceive": to "perceive" is not only to become aware of through the senses but also to understand; and to "conceive" is not only to understand or to form a general idea from particulars but also to make or to image something. The lines which McGann interprets may also be read: "understood by the soul and made of or an image of the (internal) sense of man."

[213] See, for example, stanza 9, 130: "Is it rapture or terror that circles me round . . ."; and, "Each pulse that subsides into dread of a strange thing near /Requickens with sense of a terror less dread than dear." And stanza 29, 137: "love that is one with fear[.]"

[214] Stanza 31, 138: "Fear . . . change[s] to desire, and desire to delight."

[215] The implications of the word "steadfast" in stanza 24, 135, should also be recalled here. In keeping with the imagery of stanza 5 is the suggestion in stanza 35 (139) that "The silence thrills with the whisper of secret streams /That well from the heart of the woodland." As we have established, the voice of nature is also the voice of man. See also the implications of the internal "stream" of thought in "On the Downs," Poems, II, 194, discussed previously.

[216] Here "shadows" refers to the gods who are "shadows conceived and adored of man" (stanza 23, 135), to the Christian perspective; but it may also refer to the poet's own fears (see above).

[217] In particular, see Phaedrus, 229b, 263, 279b. In his article on "A Nympholept," Baum cites the Phaedrus and Childe Harold, IV, cxv, as possible influences on Swinburne; Reul suggests the influence of the same two works in his L'Oeuvre de Swinburne, 286. Shelley's reference to nympholepsy is a casual one in a letter, but, as we shall see, the idea is important to his poetry.

[218] The O.E.D. also suggests that the longing for the ideal is a primary meaning of the term, and provides two good examples of such a use of the term, the first from Lytton's Godolphin (1831) and the second from E.B. Browning's Lady Geraldine's Courtship (1844):

"The most common disease to genius is nympholepsy -- the saddening for a spirit that the world knows not"; and, "Nymphs of mountain, not of valley, we are wont to call the Muses, and in nympholeptic climbing, poets pass from mount to star."

[219] See Edward S. LeComte, Endymion in England: The Literary History of a Greek Myth (New York, 1944), particularly 12 and 72. Shelley's ideal maiden in "Alastor" is not identified with the moon, but she is closely connected with it.

[220] In Drayton's Endymion and Phoebe, as LeComte points out (91), Phoebe comes in the form of a nymph to woo Endymion. This role is a natural one for her, as she was "*the* nymph, nympha-nympharium" (92).

[221] The poem has not been suggested as a possible source for Swinburne before. It does not include Pan, but Browning also wrote a poem on Pan: "Pan and Luna" (1880). This Pan bears little resemblance to Swinburne's, but Swinburne may have remembered the final line of Browning's poem when he wrote the first line of his own: "Arcadia, night, a cloud, Pan, and the moon." The Complete Poetical Works of Browning, ed. Horace C. Scudder (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1895), 910.

[222] Ibid., 812.

[223] Ibid., 812-813. See Shelley's "Alastor" and the famous lines in "Adonais," LII.

[224] Thomas Taylor the Platonist: Selected Writings, ed. Kathleen Raine and George Mills Harper (Princeton, 1969), 261.

[225] Merivale, "Appendix," 233.

[226] See stanza 9, 130, for example. There is also a slight suggestion that she may be associated with the dawn, as was Hesperia: in stanza 18, 133, Pan is present "In the naked and nymph-like feet of the dawn." Here, dawn may be associated with a psychological state, as it is in Songs before Sunrise and "Hesperia" itself.

[227] See also stanza 7, 129: "I call on the gods hard by, the divine dim powers /Whose likeness is here at hand, in the breathless air, /In the pulseless peace of the *fervid* and silent *flowers*" (emphasis mine). One of the triumphs of the poem is the close association of the natural and the mythical.

[228] The sexual implications of flower imagery cannot be overlooked. Blake, who also suggested that man should be able to see "Heaven in a wild flower," uses flower imagery to signify the sexual act. Heather in particular (actually a shrub rather than a flower) is associated with mid-summer. See Ad de Vries, Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery, 194-195 and 245.

[229] See the earlier discussion of Vivante's terms. It is

interesting to note that Pico della Mirandola uses Pan and Proteus as the two aspects of the "All": the "one" and the "many." (See Merivale, 95 and 257, footnote 19). The nymph is like this interpretation of Proteus.

[230] Heather is, in Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse," itself a symbol of transience:

> And this dim dusty heather that I tread,
> These half-born blossoms, born at once and dead,
> Sere brown as funeral cloths, and purple as pall[.]
> (Poems, IV, 47)

[231] "Laus Veneris," Poems, I, 25 and 11. It should be noted, as well, that heather is sacred to the Great Goddess and to Venus in particular; see Ad de Vries, 245.

[232] Commenting on these lines, Ridenour suggests that the "nymph grows from what Wordsworth calls the 'blended might' of the poet's mind and of the natural scene." "Swinburne on 'The Problem to Solve in Expression,'" 140.

[233] Although he does not assign them quite the same significance, F.A.C. Wilson also sees a connection between the nymph and Hesperia in his "Indian and Mithraic Influences on Swinburne's Pantheism . . .," 66.

[234] See Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R.F.C. Hull, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, XII (London, 1958), 86-88. The flower, as Jung also establishes here, is a common symbol of reintegration; see 107 and 175.

[235] Both are associated with the dawn: Hesperia's bosom is "warm for [his] face and profound as a manifold flower," her "silence as music," and her voice "as an odour that fades in a flame" (I, 174).

Chapter V

[1] See, for instance, Letters, III, 304 and 332.

[2] Ibid., II, 78.

[3] Francis Jacques Sypher makes the same suggestion in "A Study of Swinburne's Poetry," diss. Columbia University, 1968, 123: "he changed his title to 'Tristram of Lyonesse' because in his mature conception of the poem Tristram's 'different phases of passion' provide the most important narrative in the 'succession of dramatic scenes.'" The first quotation he uses is from Tennyson's remarks on Maud (also quoted by him earlier when he discusses Swinburne's "monodrame" in Poems and Ballads of 1866) and the second from Swinburne himself (see below).

[4] Swinburne, quoted by Samuel Chew, *Swinburne*, 170; and Vivante, *English Poetry*, 265.

[5] Chew, 178. The qualifications usually have to do not with the sensuousness of the poem (as Swinburne thought they might) but with the style. Chew's own qualification may be considered representative: he detects in the poem "an impression of strain, of constant effort after large effects, of attempting to sustain the whole at a consistently lofty level, in meter, diction, imagery, and idea. At times success crowns this display of effort and energy; more often the faults of redundancy, flamboyance and incontinence which had been growing upon him mar the work" (170).

[6] M.W. MacCallum, *Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King' and the Arthurian Story from the XVI Century* (New York, 1894), 279.

[7] In Spenser's moral allegory, the *Fairie Queen*, for example, Arthur represents Aristotle's "Twelve private morall vertues," "magnificence in particular, which . . . is the perfection of all the rest . . . ." *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh MacLean (New York, 1968), 3. And in Dryden's political allegory, *King Arthur, or the British Worthy*, he is Charles II.

[8] *Letters*, IV, 260.

[9] As he says in the "Dedicatory Epistle" to the 1904 collection of his poems, "My aim was simply to present that story, not diluted or debased as it had been in our own time by other hands, but undefaced by improvement and undeformed by transformation . . . ." (*Poems*, I, xvii-xviii)

[10] In addition to MacCallum, some of the critics who compare the three versions are: Margaret J.C. Reid, *The Arthurian Legend: Comparison of Treatment in Modern and Mediaeval Literature* (1938; London, 1960); Masao Miyoshi, "Narrative Sequence and the Moral System: Three Tristram Poems," *VN*, 35 (1969), 5-10; J. Philip Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's Idylls of the King* (New York, 1971). When referring generally to the characters in the legend, Swinburne's spelling of their names will be used.

[11] Paull F. Baum discusses the sources of Arnold's poem in *Ten Studies in the Poetry of Matthew Arnold* (Durham, North Carolina, 1958), 35-37. Baum argues that Arnold may have known Malory as well.

[12] "Tristram and Iseult," *Arnold: Poetical Works*, ed. Tinker and Lowry, part I, ll. 54 and 72, p. 132.

[13] MacCallum, 256-257 and 258.

[14] *Letters*, IV, 286.

[15] "Tristram of Lyonesse," canto IV, *Poems*, IV, 72-73. All subsequent references to this work will be included in the text itself (canto and page number).

[16] In his reply to Swinburne's letter (included in Letters, IV, 288-289), Arnold makes the rather puzzling remark that he perhaps would have chosen this ending had he known it.

[17] "Tristram and Iseult," Part III, ll. 133-136, Poetical Works, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 153. Baum considers the narrative voice to be Arnold's own and compares the conclusions here with the Marguerite poems.

[18] Ibid., l. 127, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 153.

[19] Ibid., ll. 119-124, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 153.

[20] Only A. Dwight Culler (Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, 145) seems to have noticed the similarity between the two Iseults.

[21] "Tristram and Iseult," Part II, ll. 29-32, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 143. Later she says to Tristram, "I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep" (Ibid., l. 70, p. 144). Arnold, of course, also depicts Iseult of Brittany watching over her sleeping children.

[22] Ibid., ll. 145-146, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 147.

[23] Ibid., Part III, l. 95, ed. Tinker and Lowry, 152.

[24] Culler, Imaginative Reason (143) agrees with this interpretation of the poem, but other critics suggest that Arnold disinterestedly weighs the alternatives. However, detached distance is the realm of Iseult of Brittany (and the realm of art, the two being subtly linked throughout the poem). See Robert A. Greenberg, "Matthew Arnold's Refuge of Art: 'Tristram and Iseult,'" VNL, 25 (Spring 1964), 1-4. The wise Merlin, it may be added, also occupies this realm, once he is released from passionate love by Vivian, who has grown "weary" of him.

[25] As John D. Rosenberg notes in The Fall of Camelot: A Study of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King' (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973), 116, Tennyson himself was aware that the overall "design of the Idylls compelled him to do less than justice to the Tristran legend" and planned "'a great stage drama [on] the legend of Tristram of Lyonesse.'"

[26] As Tennyson said, the poem shows the effect of religion turning "from practical goodness to the quest after the supernatural and marvellous and selfish religious excitement"; yet he also suggests that here he expresses his "strong feeling as to the Reality of the Unseen." Quoted in The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Ricks, 1661. Arthur also says that the quest will "maim the Order," but he admires Galahad and expresses his own belief in the reality of visions (Idylls, VIII, ll. 293-299, ed. Ricks, 1670 and ll. 899-915, 1687).

[27] Camelot was made to music and now Dagonet, the wise fool, tells Tristram that he has "brok[en] Arthur's music." (Ibid., X, l. 266, ed. Ricks, 1712)

[28] Ibid., X, 169-174, ed. Ricks, 1709.

[29] These rubies are linked with the diamonds which Lancelot earlier won for Guinevere. Their color, of course, is significant and in keeping with the berries on Tristram's crest. The colour red and beast images dominate the whole idyll.

[30] Ibid., 637-640, 647-648, and 650-654, ed. Ricks, 1721-1722.

[31] Ibid., 671 and 684, ed. Ricks, 1722.

[32] Ibid., 693-696, ed. Ricks, 1722-1723.

[33] Ibid., 284, 259 and 278-281, ed. Ricks, 1711 and 1712.

[34] Mark uses the expression himself when he kills Tristram, 748, 1724. It should be emphasized that Arthur's order is destroyed from within, not by Mark or by the rival Round Table which the Red Knight has founded in the North and has proclaimed to be better than Arthur's because his knights are honest about being adulterers.

[35] *Letters*, II, 78 and 73. Since Tennyson's work did not assume its final form until 1888, Swinburne is referring specifically to "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur," published in 1869. In 1871 he was unaware that Tennyson was about to publish his poem on Tristram (*Letters*, II, 171). Most of Swinburne's work on "Tristram of Lyonesse" was done after 1871 (and mostly in 1881) even though he had already published the "Prelude" in 1870 and had been engaged in works concerning Tristram since 1857. In 1857 he wrote the unfinished *Queen Yseult*; in 1859, "Joyeuse Garde"; and in 1868 a partially-completed version of the Tristram story which he lost in a cab. For full details of the composition of "Tristram of Lyonesse," see Francis Jacques Sypher Jr., "Swinburne and Wagner,"

[36] "Tennyson and Musset" (1881), *Complete Works*, XIV, 330 and 331.

[37] *Under the Microscope* (1872), *Complete Works*, XVI, 404-405.

[38] Ibid., 406-407. Thomas E. Connolly also quotes this passage in his illuminating discussion of Swinburne's concept of tragedy in *Swinburne's Theory of Poetry*, 112.

[39] Ibid., 407-410.

[40] See Chapter III. His remarks here recall his criticism of the naturalists, especially Zola, who gave their material neither artistic form nor artistic beauty. They also recall his criticism of those artists, including Zola, who are incapable of giving the "horrible" the grandeur of the "terrible." Webster, for instance, had an even greater sense than Shakespeare or Marlowe of the "delicate line of demarcation which divides . . . the terrible from the horrible and loathsome -- Victor Hugo and Honoré Balzac from Eugene Sue and Emile Zola." (*Complete Works*, XI, 294)

[41] See Chapter IV, particularly Swinburne's comments on the women of Shakespeare and Hugo. Webster also shares with Shakespeare and Aeschylus the ability to portray "natural impulse": "The grave and deep truth of natural impulse is never ignored by these poets when dealing either with innocent or with criminal passion . . . ." Complete Works, XI, 297.

[42] This final implication is in keeping with Swinburne's general estimate of Tennyson, established in Chapter I. Wendell Stacy Johnson, whose comments on the "madonna-harlot syndrome" in Tennyson were mentioned in Chapter I, suggests that Vivien is actually an "ascetic idealist turned sour. She does not, finally, disagree with Arthur's Manichean attitude toward the flesh . . . ." (Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry, 161) This remark, rather interestingly, recalls Swinburne's conception of de Sade.

[43] Swinburne directly links this passage with his criticism of Tennyson in Letters, II, 74-75: "On board ship I mean to make the innocent Iseult ask Tristram about the knights and ladies, and him tell her of Queen Morgause of Orkney and her incest with the 'blameless king' . . . ." (The last phrase is, of course, a quotation from the Idylls.) Tristram here attributes the doom to the wrath of God, whereas Swinburne suggests that the "birth and calamitous fate [is] not sent by mere mal[e]volence of heaven, yet in its awful weight and mystery of darkness [is] apparently out of all due retributive proportion to the careless sin or folly of presumptuous weakness which first incurred its infliction . . . ." Tristram and Iseult, it should be noted, make reference to God throughout the poem, but they become increasingly emancipated from the Christian ethos, and the pagan framework of the poem triumphs.

[44] See canto I, 22-23.

[45] It should also be mentioned that the other "Arthurian" work which Swinburne wrote in opposition to Tennyson, "The Tale of Balen," also reveals the power of fate. As Swinburne said in his "Dedicatory Epistle," "There is no episode in the cycle of Arthurian romance more genuinely Homeric in its sublime simplicity and its pathetic sublimity of submission to the masterdom of fate than that which I have rather reproduced than recast in 'The Tale of Balen' . . . ." Poems, I, xxviii.

[46] For a discussion of the connection between nymphs and fays (and between Nimue and the Lady of the Lake) see Lucy Allen Paton, Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance, second ed. (New York, 1960).

[47] Once again, Kerry McSweeney's summary of the major themes of the poem is relevant: "The main theme of the poem, to which everything in it is subordinated, is the dignity and grandeur of a purely naturalistic vision of life. The poem is about man's relation to the natural world, about the need to be free of imposed moral categories and of any sort of supernatural beliefs, and about the meaning and finality of death." "The Structure of Swinburne's 'Tristram

of Lyonesse,'" Queen's Quarterly, 75 (1968), 690. His article and John R. Reed's "Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse: The Poet-Lover's Song of Love," VP, 4 (1966), 99-120 are the two most important critical works on the poem. A recent article by Mary Byrd Davis on "Swinburne's Use of His Sources in Tristram of Lyonesse," PQ, 55 (1976), 96-112, has only been incorporated in the footnotes of my study.

[48] Letters, II, 51.

[49] The Arthurian Legend, 203.

[50] J.D. Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, quoted by Thomas C. Rumble, "'The Tale of Tristram': Development by Analogy," in Malory's Originality, ed. R.M. Lumiansky (Baltimore, 1964), 122-123. Rumble himself shows that Malory's usually maligned version does have thematic purposes (ones which are much like Tennyson's).

[51] (London, 1935-1939), 3 volumes. I have only been able to examine the first two volumes. In his introduction to the metrical romances, Michel lists the allusions to Tristram in extant literature and traces the development of conceptions of Tristram throughout the ages. The Douce manuscript which he presents also includes the Folie Tristran.

[52] Sir Tristrem; A Metrical Romance of the Thirteenth Century; by Thomas of Ercildoune, called Thomas the Rhymer (Edinburgh and London, 1804). The patriotic Scott confuses Thomas of Britain with Thomas of Ercildoune and considers that the French metrical romance (and Sir Tristrem itself) was derived from him. Swinburne seems to have followed him in his assumption (see "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xviii), even though Michel expressed his and others' reservations about the theory (see Tristran, xxiv-xlvii) and Scott himself had reason to doubt his theory when Gottfried's reference to "Thomas" was pointed out to him in various reviews of his edition. See Arthur Johnston's chapter on Sir Walter Scott in Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century (University of London, 1964), particularly 178-187. In his edition, Scott also includes: Ellis' abstracts of the Douce manuscript of the fragments of Thomas and of the Folie Tristran later edited by Michel; and (in later editions) the Welsh dialogue of Trystan and Gwalchmai, and Ellis' translation of the Lai de Chevrefeuil.

[53] In Letters, II, 50, he mentions the main sources he intends to use: "Mallory," "Scott's chaos," and "Michel's collection of every metrical fragment on Tristram extant." In Letters, II, 78 (also 1869), he suggests that he will also look at "the romance of his father Meliadus in the British Museum as well as the Tristran and the Lancelot." He also alludes here to Dante's mention of Launcelot and Guenevere in the Inferno. In Letters, III, 69 (1875), he requests Eugène Frédéric Hucher's Lettre à Paulin Paris . . . sur les représentations de Tristan et d'Yseult . . . du moyen âge (Le Mans, 1871), which may have led him to other sources or interpretations. And in Letters, IV, 124, he refers to J.C. Furnivall's loan (presumably in or

before 1866) of "several curious private reprints, by himself and others, of ancient poems and legends on the popular story of Tristram," which Swinburne leaves unidentified. Mary Byrd Davis gathers together these same references in "Swinburne's Use of His Sources . . . ."

[54] Except, of course, for that of Gottfried von Strassburg, which follows Thomas. Swinburne does not appear to have known this version, except through Wagner (see below). But he could have known a great deal about it through such sources as Weber's Account of German Romances on the Story of Sir Tristrem, included in the third edition of Scott's work (see Arthur Johnston, Enchanted Ground, 187) or Adolphe Bossert's comparison of the Thomas and Gottfried versions in Tristan et Iseult: à d'autre poèmes sur le Même Sujet (Paris, 1865), which is mentioned by Rosemary Picozzi in A History of Tristan Scholarship (Berne and Frankfurt, 1971), 98. The edition of Thomas used here for the purposes of comparison is Roger Sherman Loomis' The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt by Thomas of Britain (1951; New York, 1967), which uses the Norse version of Brother Robert to complete the missing sections of the poem. According to Loomis, Robert's is a more faithful rendition of these sections than Gottfried or Sir Tristrem. For a thorough study of the differences between various principal versions, see Joan M. Ferrante, The Conflict of Love and Honor: The Medieval Tristan Legend in France, Germany, and Italy (The Hague, 1973). For a good summary of the main differences, see W.T.H. Jackson, The Anatomy of Love: The Tristan of Gottfried von Strassburg (New York and London, 1971), 31-47.

[55] Letters, II, 51.

[56] Edmund Gosse, forgetting entirely about such active scenes of battle, complains that "there are no exploits, no feats of arms; the reader, avid for action, is put off with pages upon pages of amorous hyperbolic conversation between lovers, who howl in melodious couplets to the accompaniment of winds and waves." Quoted by Sypher, "Swinburne and Wagner," 178. In keeping with this comment is Sturge Moore's remark: "There is a wind which blows and blows the tale out of the mind." Quoted by Margaret Reid, The Arthurian Legend, 216.

[57] Ernest Newman, The Wagner Operas (New York, 1949), 197; also quoted by Sypher, 178.

[58] Wagner on Music and Drama, ed. Albert Goldman and Evert Sprinchorn, 268-269. In their "Introduction," the editors give a good summary of Wagner's conception of myth and the "archetypal situations" it embodies. See especially 24-28.

[59] Newman, 191. The same criticism that Wagner made of Ritter's outline could be made of Swinburne's early and unfinished Queen Yseult, a highly decorative and Pre-Raphaelite poem which includes in detail many of the incidents which Swinburne left out of his "Tristram of Lyonesse."

[60] Wagner on Music and Drama, 270.

[61] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xviii-xix.

[62] Letters, II, 51; Sypher, 176. This is the same letter in which he mentions the sources he will use and his aversion to Tennyson's Arthurian work.

[63] Letters, II, 183 (see also 182); Sypher, 182. This poem has not been traced, but Swinburne did write a poem in English on the "Prelude" to Tristan and Isolde, included with a poem on Lohengrin under the title of "Two Preludes" in A Century of Roundels (1883). In the same collection is his poem on "The Death of Richard Wagner." See Poems, V, 137 and 135.

[64] Letters, IV, 266; Sypher, 176 and footnote 26. As Sypher notes, Swinburne does not refer to this work until 1882, but the "tone" of the reference suggests "that it was not a recent acquisition."

[65] Letters, II, 38 (and see Chapter II); Sypher, 175 and 176.

[66] See Chapter II. Sypher does not mention this work, but since Hueffer (or Hüffer) was an acquaintance, it may be assumed that Swinburne read the work. Hueffer's study of Wagner (parts of which were previously published in the "Fortnightly Review") includes a summary of the connection between Schopenhauer and Wagner, the author's own notes for a performance of the "Prelude" and the finale at a concert of the London Wagner society, and an interpretive summary of the opera.

[67] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 132. Rosenberg also, as pointed out in Chapter IV, makes a comparison between Swinburne and Turner, even here making a distinction between the art which prizes "colour over outline, light over form, music over meaning" (149).

[68] Sypher also quotes the lines from "Plus Intra" referred to here and quoted in full in Chapter IV when connecting the music of Swinburne with that of Wagner (183).

[69] Zuckerman, "A Note on Swinburne and the Sea," Appendix B in The First Hundred Years of Wagner's Tristan, 183. Zuckerman is unaware of Swinburne's knowledge of Wagner and considers that any similarity between them is a "sign of affinity rather than influence" (184).

[70] John R. Reed, "Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse: The Poet-Lover's Song of Love," 100. Reed's purpose is to show the unity of the poem in terms of its recurrent words and images, which reveal its intellectual pattern. In this context the remark which Ferdinand Wagner made in a letter to George Powell is interesting: "I always feel happier and better when I have dived into the turbulent waves of Swinburne's gigantic mind. The masterly hand with which he holds the threads that seem to float unconnectedly -- and which he always succeeds in tying together when least expected seems to me exactly like Richard Wagner." Quoted by Lafourcade, Swinburne, 185. This remark is also interesting in the context of the comments by Chew and Sturge Moore, quoted above.

[71] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 135-136.

[72] One of Sypher's examples here is the influence of the song of the sailor in Act I of Wagner's opera. See Sypher, 180.

[73] Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, 8.

[74] Ibid., 149.

[75] Ibid., 149, 153, 169, in particular. As de Rougemont stresses, it is the Christian doctrine of incarnation that makes the difference.

[76] Ibid., 131 and 135. Here de Rougemont suggests that Gottfried was a Catharist.

[77] Ibid., 143. The romance of Thomas, de Rougemont adds here, is also "in many respects a first 'profanation' of courtly mysticism and of the doctrines which had inspired it — Neo-Platonism, Manichaeism, and Sufi-ism," and the whole western tradition tended to compound the error.

[78] Similarly, Tristram's self-imposed chastity when married to the second Iseult is another deliberate obstacle:

> His chastity now he is married corresponds to the placing of the drawn sword between himself and the other Iseult. But a self-imposed chastity is a symbolical suicide (here is the hidden meaning of the sword) -- a victory for the courtly ideal over the sturdy Celtic tradition which proclaimed its pride in life. It is a way of purifying desire of the spontaneous, brutish, and active elements still encumbering it. 'Passion' triumphs over desire. Death triumphs over life. (Ibid., 45)

[79] Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Creative Mythology, 175. In his footnote to this passage, Campbell refers specifically to de Rougemont.

[80] As he establishes,

> The raging heresies . . . of the time . . ., whether of Manichaean or of Waldensian Christian type -- as well as the coarsely obscene, pathological Black Mass . . . -- were as committed as the Roman Church itself to that dualistic dogma, imported from the Levant, according to which life in its spontaneity was not innocent but corrupt. (Ibid., 60)

[81] See Ibid., 178 and 43:

> Like other legends of Arthurian romance, that of Tristan and Isolt had been distilled from a compound of themes derived from pagan Celtic myth, transformed and retold as of Christian knighthood. [Its] allure [was the Celtic] reliance on nature; whereas, according to every Churchly doctrine, nature had been so corrupted by the Fall of Adam and Eve that there was no virtue in it whatsoever. The Celtic hero, as though moved by an infalliable natural grace, follows without fear the urges of the heart. And though these may promise only sorrow and pain, danger and disaster

> -- to Christians, even the ultimate disaster of hell for all eternity -- when followed for themselves alone . . . they can be felt to communicate to a life, if not the radiance of eternal life, at least integrity and truth.

[82] Ibid., 183.

[83] Ibid., 176. As Campbell had explained earlier:

> Saint Augustine had established in the early fifth century, the doctrine that salvation from the general corruption of the Fall can be attained only through the supernatural grace that is rendered not by nature but by God, through Jesus crucified, and dispensed only by the clergy of his incorruptible Church . . . ." (43, emphasis his)

[84] Ibid., 245.

[85] Ibid., 44-46 and 184.

[86] Ibid., 187. Campbell goes on to quote Gottfried Weber's interpretation of the poem -- "Nor is the pain that is so endured merely adventitious . . . . The pain is implicit, rather in the very delight . . ." -- and to discuss Gottfried von Strassburg's use of oxymoron.

[87] Ibid., 252-253.

[88] Ibid., 249.

[89] Joan M. Ferrante, The Conflict of Love and Honor, [11]. In Chapter I, it should be recalled here, her definition of courtly love was considered to be its social appearance or outward manifestation; the ultimate question has to do with its inward essence and whether it is substantially temporal (even if expressed in acceptable religious language) or other-worldly.

[90] Ibid., 12.

[91] See Chapter I.

[92] Love in the Western World, 227-231. Still, says de Rougemont, we try to avoid its true import by considering it to be about sexual passion.

[93] Wagner, quoted by Campbell, Creative Mythology, 391. Similarly, he wrote to Mathilde Wesendonck, "Suddenly it has become hideously clear to me: Amfortas is my Tristan of Act III in a state of inconceivable intensification"; also quoted by Campbell, 506.

[94] Wagner on Music and Drama, 272-273.

[95] See Ibid., 271 and Campbell, Creative Mythology, 361. Wagner also suggests that this "ardent longing for death, for absolute unconsciousness, total non-existence," "the negation of the will" was

expressed in his earlier works even when he consciously professed "optimistic" values "on Hellenic principles." Wagner on Music and Drama, 271, 278 and 279. Denis de Rougemont emphasizes Wagner's inward affinity with the myth concerning the "negation of the created world" rather than the influence of Schopenhauer and Buddhism (Love in the Western World, 231), as his own purpose is to show that the myth has this intrinsic significance and that it is central to western culture as a whole. Campbell, however, considers that Wagner gave it "an Oriental turn . . . borrowed from Schopenhauer, of the transcendence of duality in extinction" (Creative Mythology, 255).

[96] See Albert Goldman and Evert Sprinchorn's "Introduction" to Wagner on Music and Drama, 28.

[97] See Chapter III. Peter Heller gives a good account of Nietzsche's quarrel with Wagner in Dialectics and Nihilism: Essays on Lessing, Nietzsche, Mann, and Kafka (Amherst, Massachusetts, 1966).

[98] The Case of Wagner, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. Dr. Oscar Levy (1909-1911; New York, 1964), VIII, 39.

[99] Nietzsche Contra Wagner, Works, VIII, 73 and 74.

[100] Sypher, "Swinburne and Wagner," 180 and 181.

[101] Wendell Stacy Johnson, Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry, 105.

[102] Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 136. Rosenberg, however, also finds this uncharacteristic of Swinburne, as he associates the essential Swinburne with the love of Meleager and Chastelard (138-139) and with the reactions of the speaker to unfulfilled love in "The Triumph of Time" (144). Compare Sypher: "The theme of frustrated love and consequent longing for the embrace of death is typical of Swinburne's poetry, and had been expressed in such poems as 'The Triumph of Time' and Atalanta in Calydon." ("Swinburne and Wagner," 179) Johnson's similar remarks were quoted in Chapter IV.

[103] Letters, II, 51, quoted previously. This remark is attributed to 1869, but Lang's dating is tentative here.

[104] "The Death of Richard Wagner," Poems, V, 135. His music, Swinburne adds, was heard "with a rapture of dark delight, /With a terror and wonder whose core was joy, and a passion of thought set free" (Ibid., 136).

[105] On January 15, 1870, Swinburne writes to William Michael Rossetti that he had "completed and copied out" his "Hertha" (Letters, II, 85); and on February 12, of the same year he writes to Dante Gabriel Rossetti that he has finished the "prologue or overture to Tristram" (Letters, II, 90). In the same letter to Dante Gabriel, Swinburne also mentions that he has completed "Hymn of Man" and that he has written a (satirical) stanza for "Hertha."

[106] Kerry McSweeney offers a good explanation of the relationship between Love and Fate, which is celebrated in much the same language in canto IX of the poem:

> Fate is the same thing as Love and represents the same process; but Love is the word used to describe this from the point of view of its active, generative and cosmic force. Fate describes the same thing only seen from the point of view of an individual man's life, which is inevitably from the point of death and perpetual change. Fate is Love seen *sub specie mortalitatis*. Fate is simply the way things are, of which the circumstances of a man's life are a part. Because it is nothing more than this, because it is not something other than man, it is meaningless for man to fight against or attempt to change it." ("The Structure of Swinburne's 'Tristram of Lyonesse,'" 693)

[107] The story of Merlin and Nimue, which Tristram also tells Iseult here, also offers an alternative to the presentation of eternal punishment (see below).

[108] The passage quoted above clearly anticipates Tristram's potentiality for meeting the strife of existence. Later in the poem the sea is presented in a more symbolic fashion, but there are suggestions here of its significance. Swinburne's usual image of the swimmer striving joyfully in the sea is also present here:

> as a swimmer's joyous beaten head
> Rears itself laughing, so in that sharp stead
> The light ship lifted her long quivering bows
> As might the man his buffeted strong brows
> Out of the wave-breach . . . . (I, 35)

[109] In Swinburne's version, this potential exists right from the time that Iseult does not slay him in the bath when she discovers that he is Morholt's murderer. There is no hated Seneschal here; Iseult does not spare him so that she may have a champion against this suitor. Instead, she stays her hand because Tristram seemed "so great and fair a lord" and because she sees Morholt's wrath and her own as a "wound" in itself (I, 21 and 22).

[110] The "his" and "hers" of the fourth line of this passage refer to sun and sea, but are obviously meant to be confused with Tristram and Iseult and their dawning love, as the imagery of the blossoming rose also indicates. The imagery of the first canto identifies them not only with the permanent forces of nature but also, as Reed suggests, with the insubstantiality of its objective manifestations and with the cycles of nature in which day implies night, summer implies winter. See "Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* . . .," particularly 104.

[111] Iseult later reacts with equal passion to the power of the storm, and puts aside not her thoughts of God but her artificial mantle: she "Cast the furs from her and subtle embroideries /That wrapped her from the storming rain and spray" (I, 35).

[112] As the continuation of the flame imagery clearly suggests: "the love-draught that should be for flame /To burn out of them fear and faith and shame" (I, 37).

[113] As Newman affirms, Wagner's music and his Prose Sketch make it clear that "Tristan is fully aware that there is death in the cup" (The Wagner Operas, 238). It must be remembered that the words of both Isolde and Tristan have double meanings and that the underlying meanings are enhanced by the music.

[114] See Newman, 241. Here Wagner has altered Gottfried's account and used two potions to emphasize that their desire is essentially not of this world.

[115] McSweeney, "The Structure of Swinburne's 'Tristram of Lyonesse,'" 694. There is perhaps a suggestion here, too, that all men are not capable of accepting these truths and attaining "tragic joy," as Gottfried also suggests in his conception of the "noble heart." It may also be noted that in Gottfried's version, the lovers are plunged into the "pleasure and pain" of existence when they drink the love potion (Campbell, Creative Mythology, 241). As Gottfried himself says, "They were burdened with the pleasing malady that works such miracles as changing honey to gall, turning sweetness sour, setting fire to moisture . . . ." Tristan, trans. A.T. Hatto (Hammondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1960), 198.

[116] See McSweeney, 694. He parallels Swinburne's "serpentine desire," "quaffed Death," and "saw dark" to Milton's Satan, "eating Death," and lowering sky.

[117] In addition to linking the love of Launcelot and Guenevere with "night" (even though it is a "star-clothed" one) (I, 23), Tristram also says that Guenevere's face has on it "a light of cloud and fire" (I, 22), that knowledge of her "sudden sin" when she was "scarce aflower" came on her "like a flame /Touching the dark to death," and that she knows well the "serpent hour at wait /Somewhere to sting and spare not" (I, 22-24). Swinburne also links the two loves in the following lines (I, 20): the sun "had looked on no such twain /Since Galahault in the rose-time of the year /Brought Launcelot first to sight of Guenevere." The allusion to Galahault in this and the love potion passage is from Dante's Inferno.

[118] McSweeney, "The Structure of Swinburne's 'Tristram of Lyonesse,'" 695.

[119] As we have seen, Campbell also maintains that Christianity is essentially dualistic.

[120] See The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt by Thomas of Britain, ed. Loomis, 140-145.

[121] See Malory, Works, ed. Eugène Vinaver, sec. ed. (London, 1971) 239-241 and 263-267. In Malory, the plot is instigated by Iseult's

two hand-maidens, but in the Thomas versions Iseult is definitely implicated, and in the Tavola Ritonda Iseult is implicated in the plot and Palamede demands Iseult in exchange for Brangwain. See Ferrante, The Conflict of Love and Honor, 45-46.

[122] It should be added that Swinburne may have been paying his respects to Scott, who considered the rivalry between Palamede and Tristram one of the beauties of the prose versions (Sir Tristrem, lxxvi), and to William Morris, who had painted the scene on the walls of the Oxford Union. (See Letters, IV, 239, in which Swinburne refers to the painting in the context of his composition of the second canto.)

[123] As Swinburne's vocabulary indicates, in this poem he associates courtly love with natural love and fulfillment and disassociates it from the Christian ethos. Campbell, it should be remembered, also associates amor with "not the natural, animal urgencies of lust, not the supernatural, angelic desire to glow forever in the beatific vision, but the . . . purely human experience of love for a specific human being . . . ." (Creative Mythology, 59; see also 177)

[124] Tristram, of course, triumphs; but, obviously in sympathy with the pagan knight, he leaves him alive. Iseult's own joy in the strife in nature (here represented by riding in the woods) is also established in this canto (II, 43-44) and is in keeping with this passage and with Tristram's fight with the sea in canto I.

[125] "Each hung on each with panting lips, and felt /Sense into sense and spirit into spirit melt" (II, 51).

[126] Swinburne presents a reminder of their transience in the image of the butterflies which hover over Iseult as she sleeps and alight "soft as snow lights on her snow-soft flesh" (II, 52-53). John R. Reed in "Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse . . . ," 105, also points to this passage and its similarity to the description of the sea and sun in canto I (26). As the imagery indicates, their "one pure hour" is actually as transient as the butterfly in the darkness.

[127] "The Triumph of Time," Poems, I, 35, quoted in full in Chapter III.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 46. Their reaction to the knowledge is, of course, where the similarity ends. It is interesting to note that in canto I, when Iseult is first described, love sits like a shadow with "plumeless wings" over her (I, 17) and when they drink the potion they are likened to a "bird /Wounded" (I, 38).

[130] Sypher, "Swinburne and Wagner," 181.

[131] The whole tradition of the alba or aubaude is less subject to

a mystical interpretation since the lovers have just shared a night of love. As Campbell suggests, "Among the verse forms of the troubadours, the song of the parting of lovers at dawn . . . rendered simply yet dramatically the sense of discontinuity between the two worlds, on one hand of love's rapture, and on the other of the social order epitomized in the lady's dangerous spouse . . . ." (Creative Mythology, 183; see also Jackson, The Anatomy of Love, 19.) These are the worlds which Swinburne juxtaposes throughout the poem.

[132] F.A.C. Wilson, in "Swinburne, Racine, and the Permissive Morality," ELN, 10 (1973), examines "In the Orchard" and "Phaedra" as "twin poems, building around the rhythms of ardent desire or sexual intercourse and focusing on the image of the virile sword" (216). Campbell quotes the original poem upon which Swinburne modelled his "In the Orchard" as his example of a traditional alba (Creative Mythology, 184).

[133] Swinburne could well have had his own earlier poem directly in mind here, since in the Thomas tradition the lovers meet in the orchard while the jealous Mark attempts to discover them. See The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt by Thomas of Britain, trans. Loomis, 157.

[134] See canto IV, 69, where it is explained in a flashback that they fell asleep after making love and lay with the still-drawn sword between them when Mark discovered them.

[135] His thought here is in keeping with the interpretation of Iseult's request offered above.

[136] His wisdom is "so late grown clear, so miserably made strong" (III, 60).

[137] Tristram's thoughts here may be compared to the lovers' previous expectations that earth should "bring forth fruit /Unseasonable for love's sake" and be in harmony with the "instant heart alone of their desire" (II, 52). Tristram now recognizes the transitoriness of individual phenomena, himself using the image of "foam" to describe it. (See Reed, "Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse . . .," 106.)

[138] It should also be noted that Tristram himself still speaks of God: "What man would stretch forth hand on them to make /Fate mutable, God foolish, for his sake?" However, He is only a conjecture, "some unseen just God or unjust," and in Tristram's mind He virtually merges with Fate or the inevitable course of nature.

[139] See IV, 70-72. As suggested previously, Swinburne omits many details here, and takes his account of Tristram's escape from Malory (Works, ed. Vinaver, 271).

[140] See V, 77, where the contrast between Christ and Tristram is directly drawn.

[141] As she says, "God sunders earth from heaven above" and "doom keep always heaven and hell /Irreconcilable, infinitely apart" (V, 85).

[142] "Yet be thou, /God, merciful: nay, show but justice now, /And let the sin in him that scarce was his /Stand expiated with exile" (V, 85; see also 79-80).

[143] One variation of the refrain quite directly compares this force to fate: "And all their past came wailing in the wind, /And all their future thundered in the sea" (V, 82). Samuel Chew comments on this passage:

> With variations, this is the recurring refrain or burden of the canto, a refrain made up not of a separate couplet but of a pair of lines in which the first rhyme harks back to what has gone before and the second leads on to the renewal of Iseult's prayer. The persistent rhyme upon the word 'wind' comes through recurrence to symbolize the indifference of Fate to human passion. (Swinburne, 177)

Another variation of the refrain makes the force internal: "And all her soul was as the breaking sea, /And all her heart ahungered as the wind" (V, 82).

[144] See McSweeney, "The Structure of Swinburne's 'Tristram of Lyonesse,'" 698.

[145] Other notable similarities include Eloisa's acknowledgement that she "mourn[s] the lover, not lament[s] the fault," and her wish that they may share one grave. "Eloisa to Abelard," ll. 185 and 343-344, The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (London, 1968), 257 and 261.

[146] Ibid., l. 39, ed. Butt, 253.

[147] Ibid., ll. 73-90, 91-92, and 97, ed. Butt, 254, and 255. To the last statement, Eloisa adds, "(if bliss on earth there be)."

[148] Joseph Campbell, Creative Mythology, 59. Campbell quotes extensively from Eloisa's letters (and Abelard's reply) in order to support his contentions. See 53-61, in particular.

[149] Campbell also specifically compares Tristram and Abelard: "Now it may or may not be relevant that Abelard, like Tristan of the legend, was born in Celtic Brittany, . . . was a harpist of renown, . . . was given the task of tutoring the young lady who, like the maid Isolt, was comparable (in the words, again, of Gottfried) 'only to the Sirens with their lodestone, who draw to themselves stray ships.'" (Creative Mythology, 54)

[150] Eloisa writes to him that others suspect that "desire rather than friendship drew you to me, lust rather than love. So when desire ceased, whatever you were manifesting for its sake likewise vanished." Quoted by Campbell, Creative Mythology, 59.

[151] Ibid., 59-60. Campbell also quotes Abelard's reply, a prayer to God: "Pardon our great crimes, and may the enormity of our faults find the greatness of thy ineffable mercy" (Ibid., 60).

[152] Swinburne does not comment directly on the love of Eloisa and Abelard, although he does comment on Pope's poem: to him, Pope had not succeeded in "touching the key-note of genuine pathos. . . . The full capabilities of the subject are not thoroughly grasped and utilized . . . ." (Complete Works, XIV, 136 and 137)

[153] Again, Swinburne gives the events leading up to their reunion in a flashback: Ganhardine learns that his sister is still a virgin (here Swinburne substitutes a flower falling on her lap for the usual splash of water) and questions Tristram; Tristram brings his friend to see the beauty of his Iseult, and Ganhardine falls in love with Brangwain; they decide to flee to Camelot and to the protection of Launcelot and Guenevere. (VI, 88-91)

[154] See also VI, 93: "Within the full deep glorious tower that stands /Between the wild sea and the broad wild lands /Love led and gave them quiet[.]"

[155] See VI, 102. Iseult's suggestion here that "there is not said or heard /So oft aloud on earth so sure a word" as Death is in direct contrast to their earlier belief that "like a babbling tale of barren breath /Seemed all report and rumour held of death" (II, 49, quoted above).

[156] "Nay, not all things yet, /Not all things, always, dying, would I forget" (VI, 99).

[157] See the "Prelude" to Songs before Sunrise, Poems, II, 4.

[158] This passage also seems to be an answer to Arnold, just as the passages here on Merlin and Nimue answer Tennyson.

[159] Rosamond, Act IV, Tragedies, I, 273; and Act V, 282.

[160] In "The Last Tournament," l. 632, Iseult says that now Tristram has forsaken the vows of Arthur, he no longer fights with wild beasts but "art grown wild beast thyself." The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Ricks, 1721.

[161] Tristram fights without pity like a great, unrelenting force of nature, yet he fights with a kind of righteous wrath which will protect his fame. See VIII, 115 and 130.

[162] This is a variation of Swinburne's description of their drinking of the fatal cup: "And their four lips became one burning mouth" (I, 38; emphasis mine).

[163] Compare the "Prelude," [5], where Love "keeps all the choir of lives in chime" and

with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
Through day and night of things alternative,
Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
And ebb and flow of dying death and life[.]

[164] The eternal "star" of "Truth," Swinburne also adds, as he does in Songs before Sunrise, will eventually destroy "Fear," the "high priest" of the "miscreant God," and therefore the God himself (IX, 135).

[165] See IX, 144. However, like Iseult of Ireland, he does pray that God will grant them one more hour together (IX, 142), adding that if He is not merciful "he doth me wrong" (IX, 144).

[166] See IX, 141, where the two are directly juxtaposed. Tristram, however, would still take one last hour with Iseult for "all the green leaves in Broceliande" (IX, 142).

[167] Mark's forgiveness is prefigured by his divided reaction to Iseult when he knows of her love for Tristram: he "Was rent in twain betwixt harsh love and hate /With pain and passion half compassionate /That yearned and laboured to be quit of shame, /And could not" (VIII, 114). It is interesting to note that Swinburne prefers the idea of Mark's forgiveness to the idea of God's forgiveness, symbolized in some versions by the flowering trees which sprung up from the grave of each and intertwined their branches. In dealing with the Tannhäuser legend, as was suggested previously, Swinburne also excludes any indication that the Pope's rod blossomed after Tannhäuser had left.

[168] See canto VI, 99-100. John R. Reed suggests much the same thing in "Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse . . .," 116: "We are informed by the plot that Tristram and Iseult achieved their peace just as Merlin had achieved his; and, moreover, it is his own song, a testament to their love, that insures the persistence of their memory beyond death."

[169] Each woman represents a single month (Iseult, April), and together they are "the signs wherethrough the year sees move, /Full of the sun, the sun-god which is love."

[170] "Introduction," Letters, xix. Lang, refuting the charge that Swinburne's works were founded on literature, not on life, also includes Swinburne's two Greek dramas in his remark.

[171] Letters, IV, 106.

Chapter VI

[1] E.W. Gosse, The Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne (New York, 1917), 82-84.

[2] John S. Mayfield, "Swinburne's Boo," English Miscellany, 4 (1953), 161-177. As Mayfield remarks (175), some critics were not astonished by the fact: Praz, for one, suggested to Mayfield, "It is not at all as fantastic as it sounds; really Swinburne was quite capable of doing something like that." Mayfield also indicates (166) that Ruskin wrote many affectionate remembrances to "Boo" in his letters to her adoptive father, Dr. John Simons.

[3] Cecil Yelverton Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love," PMLA, 74 (1959), 123-130. Lang notes that Paull F. Baum and Mayfield himself had come up with the same conclusion at about the same time.

[4] The families were close, not only in their lives but also in their lineage. Swinburne's and Mary's mothers were sisters and their fathers were cousins. And, as Mary says, "our parental grandmothers -- two sisters and co-heiresses -- were first cousins to our common maternal grandmother; thus our fathers were also second cousins to their wives before marriage." The Boyhood of Algernon Charles Swinburne, 3; also quoted by Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love," 128.

[5] Leith, 11.

[6] Leith, 18; also quoted by Lang, 128.

[7] See Letters, I, 88-95; Leith, 18-20; and Lang, 128.

[8] Leith, 4-5 and 26-27; Lang, 129. Mary adds here that his wedding present to her was a presentation copy of Atalanta designed by Rossetti. Lang examined the book and found that the inscription read, "M.C.J. Gordon / from / A.C.S. / March 11 / 1865."

[9] Because of these letters and because of Mary's own indication that their close relationship continued on in the autumn of 1864 -- "the autumn of that year found us again both in London, and he was a frequent guest at my father's house in Chelsea" (Leith, 25) -- it may be assumed that Mary announced her engagement after the period they spent together on the Isle of Wight.

[10] See Lang, 128, who also indicates that Mary did various translations from the modern Icelandic and wrote books (which she often illustrated herself) on the country and people of Iceland.

[11] These cipher letters were discovered by Jean Overton Fuller; see her Swinburne, 270-278. She conjectures that their earlier letters (parts of which Mary transcribed before she destroyed them all) were also written in cipher.

[12] Swinburne's only direct reference to this disappointment (except for the conversation with Gosse mentioned earlier, in which he seems to have deliberately thrown Gosse off the track) occurs in a letter of 1875 in which he congratulates Gosse on his marriage: "I suppose it must be the best thing that can befall a man to win and keep the woman that he loves while yet young; at any rate I can congratulate my friend on his good hap without any too jealous afterthought of the reverse experience which left my own manhood 'a barren stock ' -- if I may cite that phrase without seeming to liken myself to a male Queen Elizabeth." Letters, III, 51.

[13] See. F.A.C. Wilson, "Swinburne's Sicilian Blade . . .," North Dakota Quarterly, 36 (Autumn, 1968), 5-18; "Swinburne and Mary Gordon," TLS, 16 January 1969, 62; "Swinburne's 'Dearest Cousin' . . .," Literature and Psychology, 19, ii (1969), 89-99; "Swinburne's Victorian Huntress: Autobiographical Traces in Atalanta in Calydon," Komos, 2 (1970), 118-125; "Swinburne in Love: Some Novels by Mary Gordon," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 11 (1970), 1415-1426; "Fabrication and Fact in Swinburne's The Sisters" and "Swinburne's Prose Heroines and Mary's Femmes Fatales," VP, 9 (1971), 237-248 and 249-256; and "Swinburne and Kali: The Confessional Element in Atalanta in Calydon," VP, 11 (1973), 215-227. Mary's Auld Fernies' Son of 1880 is a good example of the triangular situation she manipulates in various ways in her novels. Here, as Wilson summarizes it, Christina first chooses Douglas Milne, a fiery, Frenchified man who drinks far too much, over Edmund Allardyce, a staid Scottish farmer. She then repents and is forgiven by the farmer.

[14] See, for example, Letters, VI, 37 and 195.

[15] Lesbia Brandon, ed. Hughes, 9-10. See also 6. The passage quoted here is reminiscent of Swinburne's comments on the poetry of Shelley and Byron, and of his own later nature poetry, even of "A Nympholept," where Pan takes the place of the Great Goddess of the sea. Swinburne suggests that Herbert was developing his own "new and credible mythology" and was now a "small satisfied pagan" (11). All subsequent references to Lesbia Brandon will be included in the text itself.

[16] See also 43, where he makes the same remark to Margaret, who has just sung him a sea ballad. In the fragment entitled "Herbert Winwood: Uses of Prosody," this Herbert also expresses his fascination with such women. See Hughes, "Appendix" to Lesbia Brandon, 182-183.

[17] It is interesting to note that even here the Mazzini-figure is presented as being somewhat too optimistic.

[18] Redgie Harewood of A Year's Letters (ed. Sypher) is older than Bertie, but in the "Prologue" to the letters, his interest in flagellation is established, as is his interest in Mazzini and Italian politics in the letters themselves.

[19] Theodore Reik, "Masochism in Modern Man," Of Love and Lust (1941; New York, 1957), especially 233, 261, 304-305, and 318. McGann also mentions Reik's theories in his Swinburne, 282, but he concentrates on the place of ritual and fantasy in masochism, likening it to "art for art's sake." A remark which Havelock Ellis (who makes no essential distinction between sadism and masochism) makes is also interesting here:

> In algolagnia, as in music, it is not cruelty that is sought; it is the joy of being plunged among the waves of that great primitive ocean of emotions which underlies the variegated world of our everyday lives . . . . If we . . . ask ourselves why this emotional intoxication exerts so irresistible a fascination, we might find a final reply in Nietzsche -- who regarded this kind of intoxication as of great significance both in life and in art -- that it gives us the consciousness of energy and the satisfaction of our craving for power. Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1905; New York, 1942), I, Part II, 185.

[20] In his notes to this passage, Hughes suggests that the heroic attitude Swinburne associates with flagellation is obviously different from the attitudes of de Sade.

[21] Fuller, who examined the manuscript, suggests that the last word should be "untired." Swinburne, 130.

[22] See A Year's Letters, ed. Sypher, 14, 41, 53, and 59. All subsequent references to this work will be included in the text.

[23] The passage is quoted in full in Chapter I. It is interesting to note that in his introduction to his edition of the novel, Edmund Wilson suggests that "the hero's ecstatic ride with his cousin seems exactly to correspond with Mrs. Leith's account of her reckless country rides with Algernon . . . ." The Novels of A.C. Swinburne, 15.

[24] She is at least six years older than he is (A.Y.L.,41), and when she firsts meets him, when he is eleven and she seventeen she considers him "silly and young of his age . . ." (28).

[25] Here Lady Midhurst compares her to Mary Stuart and, more particularly, to Elizabeth. Her suggestion that Clara will keep to the "strait gate" is similar to the suggestion which the speaker makes of his beloved in "The Triumph of Time."

[26] See Lesbia Brandon, 44 and 89, and 44 and 52. Later in the novel (94), Herbert takes a moonlit gallop over the moors, reciting verses as he rides. But he is with his friend Walter Lunsford, not Lesbia. This ride, as suggested previously, may also be recorded in "Hesperia" and "In Memory of John William Inchbold."

[27] As F.A.C. Wilson points out, Mary's heroines often express the same desire: Mollie in A Black Martinmas is said to have "often regretted that she had not been a boy. Hers was one of those girl

natures which have a good deal of the boy or man in their composition . . . ." Quoted by Wilson, "Swinburne's Victorian Huntress . . .," 122.

[28] See Fuller, 129 and 134; and F.A.C. Wilson, "Swinburne's 'Dearest Cousin' . . .," 94, and "Swinburne's Prose Heroines and Mary's Femmes Fatales," 250.

[29] This passage describes her when Bertie has left for Eton; later on in the novel, she surrounds herself with people and "had grown out of the quiet intolerance of people in general which at first kept her passive and averse to fresh faces" (86).

[30] See 1-2. They are described as being similar in appearance, except that his hair has more red in it and his hazel eyes more green in them.

[31] It is interesting to note that whenever they experience such a moment together she always breaks it off by reminding him of the Lesbia he will meet and marry (see 43 and 81).

[32] See Lady Midhurst's scornful analysis of the letter, A Year's Letters, ed. Sypher, 89.

[33] As Sypher suggests in his notes (187-188), both the quotations from Chalfont and the Indian philosopher, Aboulfadir, appear to be made up by Swinburne himself.

[34] Lady Midhurst indicates here that if Clara does not send the letter, she will send Redgie Clara's compromising letters to an earlier admirer. Redgie, however, has already indicated that he would not be deterred by these letters (146). Lady Midhurst also indirectly reveals here that she is partially prompted by her own jealous affection for Redgie (154).

[35] Lady Midhurst does not appear to have read the letter directly (or to know exactly how far the relationship has progressed).

[36] The passage reflects the remarks that Mary says Swinburne made when he heard of her engagement, except that she says that Swinburne felt like an "elder brother." Lesbia's concern with the difference in age is rather unusual, as she is only about "three years older" (101) than Herbert, who is now twenty-four (99), and Margaret had previously suggested that Lesbia was the perfect age for him (44). Lesbia finds it difficult to believe that he does not "care for age or name -- on either side" (102).

[37] It is a face "with close melancholy lips . . ., with deep thick eyelids and heavy lashes that seemed as though sodden and satiate with old and past tears; with large bright brows" (117). Comparing this description with the previous one of Lesbia (89), Hughes surmises it must be her (561). But see below.

[38] Swinburne seems to have disguised his fictionary portrait of Adah Menken by making Leonora Harley much like Fanny Cornforth (see Fuller, Swinburne, 168).

[39] See Fuller, 163-166.

[40] Compare "Tristram of Lyonesse" and Lady Midhurst's letter to Amicia after her husband's death, A Year's Letters, 101-104. Here Lady Midhurst makes an important distinction between "the endurance of things that are" and "the sacrifice of Christian resignation offered to the supreme powers," the "fortitude of the feeble" (102).

[41] The threat of certain letters which Denham has in his possession seems to be involved, but exactly how is difficult to say.

[42] In a very complicated discussion, Mr. Linley tells him that he is the son of Lesbia's mother and Margaret's father (122-124).

[43] Hughes, 335-340. Hughes does not indicate how he arrived at this figure, and Fuller suggests only that we do not know Margaret's age (141). However, Mr. Linley tells Denham that Margaret is three years older than Lesbia. Since we know that Lesbia is seventeen when Herbert is thirteen, just about fourteen, and that Denham is thirty when Herbert is eleven, just about twelve (in 1843), we may conclude that Margaret is twenty when Denham is thirty-two and Herbert is at Eton. These calculations would square with the suggestion that in 1854 when Herbert meets Lesbia for the first time, Margaret looks younger than her twenty-four years (88); this statement could be read as if she were much older than twenty-four years and looked younger than twenty-four.

[44] See Lesbia Brandon, 83 and 88. Gennaro is, of course, the incestuous offspring of Lucrezia and her brother; she loves this child, as Hughes says, with "perhaps more than a maternal love" (549).

[45] Fuller, 141. The description of the "other woman" is, as Fuller suggests, quite in keeping with Lesbia's character.

[46] See Fuller, 171. The indications that Herbert comes to see Lesbia for the last time already saddened by the death of his "old friend" (Lesbia Brandon, 157) led Hughes to think that the chapter on the death of Margaret's lover preceded that of Lesbia's death, and to conjecture that the "old friend" was more likely Walter Lunsford than Denham. Fuller, however, suggests that the friend could be Mariani, the Italian revolutionary who dies in a chapter which Swinburne labelled as "penultimate" and Hughes places after Lesbia's death (see Fuller, 170).

[47] Both the late chapters concerning Denham and the additions to the other chapter concerning Walter are most likely late additions, the first done on paper watermarked 1865 and the second, 1866. (See Fuller, 169-170.) The chapter on the suicide of Margaret's lover is written on paper watermarked 1859 and the suicide of Lesbia, 1863.

(See Hughes, 465.) My conjecture here about Swinburne's decisions to build up another character as a replacement for Bertie is an extension of Fuller's suggestions.

[48] See "The Triumph of Time," lines 278-280 and 353 (Poems, I, 43 and 45); lines 354 and 360 (Ibid., 45 and 46) and the cancelled line noted by Lang, "Songs we had written or words we had said"; and lines 195-196 (Ibid., 40): "Would I change my sweet one love with a word? /I had rather your hair should change in a night[.]" Lang takes the characteristics Gosse associated with "Boo" and attributes them (and the connection of Swinburne's own love with "The Triumph of Time") to Mary: "She gave him roses, she played and sang to him, and he conceived from her gracious ways an encouragement she was far from seriously intending. . . . In a very wretched frame of mind, Swinburne went up to Northumberland, and there wrote "The Triumph of Time" . . . [which] represented with exactest fidelity the emotions which passed through his mind . . . ." Gosse, quoted by Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love," 123.

[49] See Poems, I, 185, 153, and 272.

[50] See, in particular, the later poem "At a Month's End": "You could not tame your light white sea-mew, /Nor I my sleek black pantheress"; and, "And south for you and north for me." Poems, III, 32.

[51] Swinburne suggests in his "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, vii, that the poems of the volume are both dramatic and personal and that it is to his credit as an artist that one sort cannot be distinguished positively from the other. Fuller, it may be added, attempts to make even the most obviously dramatic poems into portraits of Mary.

[52] Poems, I, 200 and 216; in a more dramatic context, the women of "Madonna Mia" (which also includes the image of golden apples) and "The Leper" are also golden-haired (Poems, I, 273 and 122). Related in imagery to these poems are early works not included in Poems and Ballads: "Lines," and, in a more dramatic context, "A Dream of the River" and "Southwards" (Complete Works, I, 128, 98, and 100). "Memories," another early poem not included in Poems and Ballads, should also be mentioned here (Complete Works, I, 131), as should be the "Rondel" "kissing her hair," even though the colour of the woman's hair is not specified (Poems, I, 128).

[53] Poems, I, 82 and 83, and 87.

[54] This image predominates in the later "personal poems" of lost love: in "A Forsaken Garden," perhaps the best of these poems, the roses of the garden near the sea now "lie dead" as do the lovers themselves. Related poems are "The Year of the Rose," "A Wasted Vigil," "Pastiche," and perhaps also "Relics." See Poems, III, 22, 36, 40, 90, and 27-28.

[55] See Poems, I, 151, 117, and 185.

[56] "A Leave-Taking" (Poems, I, 52 and 53; see also "The Triumph of Time"); "An Interlude" (Poems, I, 199; see also "Before Dawn" and "Before Parting"); "Félise" (Poems, I, 189).

[57] Unless, to simplify again, she was both fair and dark, both drawn to Lesbian love and conventional marriage, and both coldly chaste (for either reason) and amorously cruel.

[58] Sypher gathers together the evidence from Swinburne's letters for this date in his "Introduction" to the novel, xx.

[59] As established earlier, Mary most likely announced her intentions to marry Colonel Leith in the autumn of 1864.

[60] Poems, I, 37.

[61] See Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love," 126.

[62] McGann, Swinburne, 215. Fuller and Wilson, however, answer the sort of objection that McGann puts forward by suggesting that Swinburne could have known at an earlier date than suggested here of Mary's impending marriage and therefore imagined her as she might become. It should also be added that Wilson's examination of Mary's novels reveals that she does give many variations on the relationship between her heroines and the Swinburne-like figure and that there are often two women-figures, one dark and one fair, as there are in the novels of Swinburne.

[63] Quoted by Hughes, "Unpublished Swinburne," Life and Letters, 56 (1948), 17. This is only a portion of the poem.

[64] Ibid., 28.

[65] Ibid., 29. Hughes establishes by reference to other descriptions by Swinburne that the seascape is that of Caphaeton in Northumberland (31-32).

[66] Ibid., 33 and 32.

[67] Letters, I, 38-39. Here Swinburne imitates Mrs. Gamp, as he often does in his letters. This passage is also quoted by Hughes, 33.

[68] They are also, it should be added, reminiscent of other poems in the first volume, like "A Leave-Taking," in which the poet goes down to the sea alone, knowing she will not care, even if he were to drown (Poems, I, 53); "An Interlude," in which the poet rides through the wet spring woods and sees his beloved pause by a stream (Poems, I, 199); and the "Rondel" "kissing her hair" in which the poet would drown for love of her (Poems, I, 128). Of the early poems, the published "Lines" is also related; here the poet "knew it would be sweet to hold /And strain between my hands the gold /Of her long hair" and had "one tress left" which is now "too pale to look like gold" (Complete Works, I, 128). Other unpublished early verses mentioned

by Lafourcade, particularly "A Woman's Hair" and "Letters," could be related as well (see Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 64-66). And in later poems like "At a Month's End" and "Relics," as we have seen, the beloved is linked with the south and with Italy.

[69] Hughes, 30.

[70] Ibid., 23.

[71] Ibid., 28.

[72] Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, I, 107.

[73] Raleigh Trevelyan, A Pre-Raphaelite Circle (London, 1978); and William Bell Scott, Autobiographical Notes, 2 vols., ed. W. Minto (New York, 1892).

[74] Scott, II, 256 and 257; R. Trevelyan, 96.

[75] See, for example, Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, I, 106. It is often suggested that the delightfully outspoken Lady Midhurst of both novels is a portrait of Pauline. But, as Raleigh Trevelyan agrees (191), this fierce grandmother is actually quite unlike Pauline.

[76] Scott, II, 256. He also remarks that her hazel eyes were her most striking feature (II, 4; see also R. Trevelyan, 7-8).

[77] See George Otto Trevelyan's letter, "Appendix II" of Gosse's Life, 324.

[78] Scott, II, 256.

[79] Quoted by Scott, II, 34.

[80] Pauline, who was herself a republican, if a milder one, did a humorous watercolour while Swinburne was in France entitled "A.C.S., sent to the guillotine by order of Louis Napoleon, addresses the people." Mayfield includes it on the front cover of his Swinburneiana (Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1974), and comments on it 175-177.

[81] This one purportedly about a twin sister of the Queen, a prostitute who finally kills herself out of love for Lord John Russell. See R. Trevelyan, 76.

[82] Letters, I, 76-77; see R. Trevelyan, 150. Lady Trevelyan also seems to have made a drawing of this, for Swinburne adds that he "saw the likeness then done the other day at Wallington, and howled over it."

[83] The possible similarities between Pauline and Amicia of A Year's Letters (who has some qualities in common with Margaret) will not be explored here.

[84] See, for example, *Letters*, I, 117 and I, 137-139.

[85] Fuller, *Swinburne*, 127. Both Gosse (*Life*, 71) and Philip Henderson (*Swinburne*, 45) maintain that Swinburne stayed with the Trevelyans, but R. Trevelyan can find no record of this visit (163).

[86] Scott, II, 15-16.

[87] See also 20: "Of any possible passion she seemed to give but slight promise. Father and brother she had loved warmly and well; her husband also, and chiefly since marriage; but with a dutiful and temperate love half made up of kindness and half of habit . . . ."

[88] See also 49: "[Her guests] had never seen her in London so royally beautiful . . . . Her actions had the vivid grace and splendour of fire . . . ."

[89] R. Trevelyan, 7, and Scott, II, 256.

[90] Millais, Holman Hunt, Madox Brown, William Michael and Christina Rossetti, Arthur Hughes, Woolner, Wooster, Munro, and Woodward all enjoyed visits to Wallington. And some of them also helped Pauline and Scott with their project of remodelling and redecorating Wallington. Scott's panels in Wallington Hall, particularly "The Roman Wall" and "The Nineteenth Century," are, it may be added, among his best works.

[91] Pauline shared with Swinburne not only a love of art and literature but also a love of Northumberland, its early history and ballads (like "The Fair Maid of Wallington," which she and Sir Walter first introduced to Swinburne) and its most recent heroic spirits (like Grace Darling, whose spirit Swinburne commemorated in a poem and Pauline in one of the panels done by Scott). See R. Trevelyan, 151. In "A Study from Memory," Swinburne's sonnet to Pauline, written years after her death, he does associate her with music: she was "blither-voiced than quiring strings" and possessed a "spirit inviolable that smiled and sang /By might of nature and heroic need" (*Poems*, V, 230). At one gathering in *Lesbia Brandon*, Margaret sings "A Jacobite's Farewell," a ballad of Swinburne's own composition. A related poem, "A Jacobite's Exile," includes a description of the Wansbeck, the stream which separates the Caphaeton and Wallington estates, and of "the wood that rings wi' the sang she sings /I may not see or hear." See *Poems*, III, 284 and R. Trevelyan, 134.

[92] R. Trevelyan, 204. He also includes the portrait in his illustrations.

[93] See *Lesbia Brandon*, 62 and *A Year's Letters*, 59. Yet Herbert's description of Fairfax's painting of Margaret does bear some resemblance to the Scott painting, included in R. Trevelyan's book. It may also be added that Pauline's portrait by Scott is also close to the "portrait head in the right corner of a picture of the Virgin Crowned" which Reginald compares to Clara, adding that it "has thick

curled gold hair, like my sister's." This picture is included in Sypher's edition of A Year's Letters.

[94] See R. Trevelyan, 181.

[95] As we have seen, Lang transfers to Mary the story that Gosse tells of Boo giving roses to Swinburne. The rose garden of many of the later "personal poems" like "A Forsaken Garden" is usually linked with the garden at East Dene on the Isle of Wight and therefore with Mary (see Philip Henderson, Swinburne, 95 and 196; and Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 146). But R. Trevelyan tells us that "Pauline's particular love was for a walled flower garden . . . in a lush dell that contrasted marvelously with the wild Northumberland hills . . ." (69); and many of Swinburne's rose garden poems are set in the north (see "The Year of the Rose," Poems, III, 37 and "Winter in Northumberland," Poems, III, 115). The sea of the early poems of lost love and of "The Forsaken Garden" is usually associated with the northern sea near Caphaeton (see Hughes' suggestions, quoted above, and Rosenberg, "Swinburne," 146).

[96] Of the early poems which Hughes mentions (one supposedly written to Pauline herself), the woman figure is associated with the "angel's face" of Lucrezia Borgia — a combination of two of the qualities linked with Pauline through the figure of Margaret.

[97] According to Lona Mosk Packer in her biography of Christina Rossetti, Scott thought of Pauline as more than a friend, and Pauline therefore provoked Christina's jealousy. As her biographer suggests, Christina depicts Pauline as a temptress in "Look on This Picture and on This" and as a lush mistress in "Triad," which also describes Scott's other women, a drab woman like his wife and a love-sick virgin like Christina herself. See Christina Rossetti (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), particularly 86-92 and 101-117. It should be noted that Raleigh Trevelyan accepts neither the idea that Pauline was the beloved of William Bell Scott nor the suggestion that Swinburne was attracted to her.

[98] Something does seem to have occurred between Swinburne and Pauline during or before his visit to Wallington in December to January of 1862 to 1863. When he first arrived, Lady Trevelyan was in London, and after she returned he suddenly and inexplicably left Wallington early on the morning of January 5th and rode to Scott's house in Newcastle. As Scott describes it, just as they were leaving for a holiday "to the wild sea-coast of Tynemouth,"

> Swinburne suddenly appeared, having posted to Morpeth from Wallington early that morning. Why so early? he could not well explain; just thought he had been long enough there! he wanted letters at the post, but had not given his address! I could enquire no further; there appeared to be some mystery he did not wish to explain . . . . (II, 69)

This incident remains a mystery, but Raleigh Trevelyan supposes that Swinburne could have had "words with Pauline" (189-190). There does seem to be a break in Swinburne's correspondence with Pauline after this incident. But this is difficult to ascertain because Sir Walter destroyed after her death in 1866 many of Swinburne's letters to her as "being indecent or scandalous" (R. Trevelyan, 170).

[99] It may be added here that "The Triumph of Time," the poem which Swinburne said was to precede his "trilogy" of "Dolores," "The Garden of Proserpine," and "Hesperia," also explores in a dramatic fashion the attitudes to existence which can result from a lost idealism: the still-dualistic celebration of the body alone and the desire to deny life entirely and achieve union in death. As we have suggested previously (and will mention again in the context of "Thalassius") the relationship between this "trilogy" and the pattern which emerges clearly in the later poems in which both the strife and the "central peace" of life is encountered is a difficult one.

[100] Poems, III, 23 and 24.

[101] Letters, IV, 106.

[102] McGann, Swinburne, 217.

[103] McGann does not mention the novels here, but the scene in Lesbia Brandon in which Margaret's lover commits suicide is similar to that in Goethe's Sorrows of Werther.

[104] Ibid., 217. It should be noted that McGann does not view "Dolores" -- or "Hesperia" and "Thalassius" -- in quite the same fashion as I do.

[105] Lang, "Swinburne's Lost Love," 125-126. McGann would also appear to agree with Lang, but he suggests that Mary was to Swinburne not only the Ideal Maiden but also all of his images of women (Swinburne, 220).

[106] See Fuller, Swinburne, 114-117, for her identification of Mary with Dolores.

[107] Fuller does not seem to be troubled by the inconsistencies, however, and suggests that Mary is Margaret, Lesbia, and Dolores. It seems as if the figure in the novels which is most like Dolores is Leonora Harley, a portrait of Menken.

[108] There are several recent articles on the poem: Richard D. McGhee, "'Thalassius': Swinburne's Poetic Myth," VP, 5 (1967), 127-136; Kerry McSweeney, "Swinburne's 'Thalassius,'" Humanities Association of Canada Bulletin, 22, i (1971), 50-55; and Donald C. Stuart, "Swinburne: The Composition of a Self-Portrait," referred to earlier, in Chapter III, in connection with "The Triumph of Time." The analysis offered here is closest to Stuart's, but does not exactly coincide with his.

[109] McGann, Swinburne, 217 and 219.

[110] McSweeney, who interprets the poem somewhat differently,

suggests that the poem, written between late 1879 and early 1880, looks forward to the poetry which Swinburne was still to write. See "Swinburne's 'Thalassius,'" particularly [50] and 54.

[111] There is no actual mythological figure corresponding to Thalassius. Venus, however, is called Thalassia when she arises out of the sea; and Thalyssia is the name of the festivals in honor of Dionysus and Demeter.

[112] Poems, III, 296. All subsequent references to the poem here will be included in the text itself.

[113] See McSweeney, "Swinburne's 'Thalassius,'" [50]. It should be noted that the lines in both the beginning and concluding sections of the poem can also be interpreted on a more literal level: Swinburne saw himself as a child of sea and sun rather than of earth.

[114] See Campbell, Creative Mythology, 202-203: "Born of a widow, beyond the sea, who expired on giving him birth, Tristan had come, as it were, from nowhere. Tossed ashore from the storming waters, he had been born as from the womb of nature itself . . . . Miraculously, as it were, he had appeared with the power and the glory of a god, yet in the character of a boy." Tristan was, of course, raised by foster-parents without knowing the story of his birth; after being kidnapped by merchants and set ashore alone in Cornwall, he wins the favour of Mark because of his accomplishments before he knows that Mark is his uncle.

[115] See, for instance, Jung and Kerényi, Introduction to a Science of Mythology, particularly 38, 57, 63, and 120-129.

[116] Stuart, "Swinburne: the Composition of a Self-Portrait," 118.

[117] Stuart makes this suggestion because his thesis is that the belief in absolute values must be overthrown so that the poet may "make of himself his song" (120). For him, as for Peckham, Swinburne believes that value is only instrumental and imposed and that art is "a verbal construction through which the self is expressed" (122).

[118] Both the continuing "strife" of things and the difficulty in joyfully striving with nature are included in Songs before Sunrise, as has been established in Chapter II.

[119] Stuart, 124.

[120] Kerry McSweeney reminds us that similar Miltonic echoes were present in "Tristram" ("Swinburne's 'Thalassius,'" 55, footnote 8). However, he does not find the passages to be similar in import.

[121] Stuart, 125.

[122] See, in particular, McGhee, 134, where she is described as Swinburne's "Muse" of perversion.

[123] Stuart, 124.

[124] Complete Works, XIII, 213. This passage, mentioned previously in Chapter IV, is a comparison of the dark lady of L'Homme Qui Rit to the Promethean women of Aeschylus. It may be suggested that Euripides' Bacchae is also important in this context as well. See Rutland, Swinburne, A Nineteenth-Century Hellene, 326.

[125] Swinburne also directly echoes the passage from his description of the Aeschylean woman a few lines later in the poem: in Thalassius' ears, "the music that makes mad /Beat always" (Poems, III, 307). It should also be noted here that the images of stormy sea and riding horses which are associated with Swinburne's presentation of man's striving with the forces of nature are also present here, as is the image of the seamew (V, 307). Such passages also suggest that this period is not an entirely negative one.

[126] Stuart, however, considers the second stage to begin after the youth meets the god of Love (124).

[127] From another perspective, that of the effect of the experience upon Thalassius, in his period of "passion" rather than "thought," the youth first feels the impact of sorrow and then that of mad Dionysian mirth (see below). It is interesting to note in this context that, in the words of Karl Otfried Müller, Dionysus was "the personified expression not only of the most rapturous pleasure, but also of a deep sorrow for the miseries of human life." A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece, trans. George Cornewall Lewis and J.W. Donaldson (London, 1858), I, 306.

[128] Complete Works, XVI, 362, also quoted in Chapter III.

[129] See Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces, particularly 109-120.

[130] Complete Works, XI, 292. See also 123, where he identifies the "light of heavenly wisdom" with "Apollo or Athene."

[131] A comment which Murray Krieger makes on Nietzsche's Apollo and Dionysus is particularly relevant here: "The Dionysian must be there for the Apollonian to transform, so that Apollonian radiance can retain its brilliance only by continually radiating the Dionysian abyss. . . . Without the Dionysian, the Apollonian would seem to reflect a shallow, unearned optimism, a misreading of life that leaves the inescapable terror out of it." The Tragic Vision (New York, 1960), 9.

[132] "On the Cliffs," Poems, III, 324.

[133] Ibid., 315.

[134] The indication that his song "mingles north and south" also suggests that he has achieved a reconciliation.

[135] See Poems, III, 299:

But the man dying not wholly as all men dies
If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise;
If aught of deed or word
Be seen for all time or of all time heard.

Chapter VII

[1] Poems, III, 215 and 216.

[2] Letters, V, 209. This letter also indicates that the poem is meant to incorporate all of the common images of Pan, among them, "satyr," "minstrel," "piper," "recluse," and "spreader of panic."

[3] Poems, III, 215.

[4] Ibid., 219 and 218. It is interesting to note that Smith observes in his Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, I, 231, that Apollodorus considered Apollo to have been given the gift of prophecy by Pan. Swinburne appears to have used this dictionary when formulating his conception of Apollo: see Letters, III, 57, 68, and 141.

[5] Poems, III, 219 and 220.

[6] Pan proclaims the realm of song to be his, and it is in the sense that it originates in him. The debate between them is deliberately left unresolved.

[7] "Tenebrae," Songs Before Sunrise, Poems, II, 90. See also the "Epilogue," Ibid., 228.

[8] See, however, such poems as "To Walt Whitman" and "Cor Cordium" (on Shelley), Poems, II, 120-125 and 171.

[9] In his letters, Swinburne calls the poem one of his "most important" and his "best" "lyrical works" (Letters, III, 152 and 169).

[10] Poems, III, [5] and 6. The pronouncement of the oracle is translated in the first stanza of the poem.

[11] Ibid., 8.

[12] Letters, III, 137 and 142; see also 130 and 143-144, where essentially the same idea is expressed.

[13] Poems, III, 9.

[14] Letters, III, 144.

[15] There are, of course, various logical problems in both poems. Here, as a symbolic figure, Apollo is equally dependent upon the soul of man; and, as the soul of man, man's word and song, Apollo also incorporates the thoughts which instigated and the songs which celebrate the false God. As we will see when examining Swinburne's criticism, Apollo is seen both as the god of all song and as the god of "prophetic" song. There are also problems with juxtaposing the realms of Pan and Apollo. As we will also see when returning to some of the works discussed previously, Swinburne does not draw a clear distinction between Hertha and Apollo, and between Hertha and Pan. At times Apollo appears to be the same as Hertha, whereas at other times, Pan is the same as Hertha. At other times, however, Apollo represents only the soul of man, the highest evolution of nature and Pan only the blind working of "things."

[16] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xvi.

[17] Poems, II, 94.

[18] Another of Swinburne's translations which should be mentioned here is the "Delphic Hymn to Apollo," Poems, VI, 372.

[19] Letters, IV, 171-172.

[20] Poems, V, 45. Another important source, also mentioned in Chapter II, is the Symposium (see below).

[21] See Poems, I, 173-174.

[22] Quoted by Lafourcade, La Jeunesse, II, 577. Swinburne seems to have decided to substitute the lines, "as a ghost rearisen, /Pale as the love that revives as a ghost rearisen in me" (Poems, I, 175).

[23] Poems, I, 173 and 175.

[24] Swinburne's conception of memory here, and elsewhere, is quite archetypal. The realm of which he speaks is also presented in the image of the paradise-garden in other works. In "A Ballad of Dreamland," a poem on the achievement of this internal state, the speaker hides his "heart in a nest of roses." He inhabits an internal paradise: "The green land's name that a charm encloses, /It never was writ in the traveller's chart, /And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is" (Poems, III, 85; as mentioned previously, the bird image is also involved here). And "In Memory of Barry Cornwall," a poem concerning the achievement of immortality through art, Barry Cornwall inhabits "the garden of death, where the singers whose names are deathless /One with another make music unheard of men, /Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long breathless" (Poems, III, 69). The more common image is, however, that of being part of the sun or, if one is a singer in times of darkness, of being a star in that darkness.

[25] Poems, II, 8 and 236.

[26] Poems, III, 309. The term "inner sunlight" is also used in Swinburne's description of "The Last Oracle," Letters, III, 137, quoted above.

[27] Swinburne may be drawing the same sort of distinction when he suggests in "Tristram of Lyonesse" that Love and Fate are the same power, but that Love includes the soul of man, whereas Fate does not. See the footnote above on the problems involved in separating Apollo from Pan and both from Hertha.

[28] Poems, IV, [5] and 6.

[29] See, for instance, John 1: 1-15. It is interesting to note, as well, that Christ is also associated with the winged sun-god in such passages as the following: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (Malachi 4 :2) Swinburne is, of course, but returning the symbolism to its pagan origin.

[30] As Jung suggests in Symbols of Transformation, Collected Works, V, 107, this symbol is presented in the Homilies of Clement of Rome.

[31] Letters, III, 142, quoted above.

[32] And, Swinburne implies, Dante knew not that he himself was God, as part of the power of Apollo; see the "Prelude" to "Tristram of Lyonesse," Poems, IV, 11.

[33] See McGann, Swinburne, 140, who compares Swinburne's treatment of Dante to Blake's treatment of Milton, particularly his Satan. And see below for a discussion of Swinburne's problematic use of Apollo to symbolize all song and only "prophetic" song.

[34] One must be careful not to identify all images of light too strictly with Apollo, for, as mentioned in Chapter II, Swinburne uses the images of darkness and light to describe the death of the false Gods and the imminent return of the belief in the divinity of man and therefore Apollo, and to describe the continual destructiveness and creativity of nature. In "A Nympholept," images of dark and light are used to describe Pan, who in this poem is the same force as Hertha and who includes the spirit of man.

[35] Poems, V, 47.

[36] See also "Hesperia" and "Thalassius."

[37] Poems, V, 46 and 47. This passage may be directly compared to the undersea passage in "Thalassius" (III, 308).

[38] As the imagery here suggests, Swinburne's poem also hints at the original creation of the word and the light within man and at the process by which it is recovered not only by the individual soul but also by all men.

[39] *Poems*, V, 50-52.

[40] See, in particular, canto one, *Poems*, IV, 25-26; canto two, 52-53; and canto eight, 129.

[41] McGann, *Swinburne*, 156; also quoted in Chapter IV.

[42] *Poems*, V, 51-52.

[43] See the stanza following the last one quoted, Ibid., 52.

[44] Ibid., 51. Here Swinburne refers specifically to the "flocks" of sails; but they have been compared to "flocks" of birds, which will be compared to the "flocks" of butterflies, which are compared to "flocks" of snow.

[45] It should be remembered that as an individual spirit Thalassius is as "slight and light" as a bird and as fragile as a "sea-flower" (*Poems*, III, [295] and 296), and that the individual soul is compared to a ship on the stormy seas in "A Channel Passage" (*Poems*, VI, 282). In addition, the same Greek word means both "butterfly" and "soul" (as Swinburne himself observes, *Letters*, VI, 63) and the image is used in this context in "Tristram of Lyonesse" (canto two, *Poems*, IV, 52-53).

[46] In this context, see "The Interpreters," in which it is more directly affirmed that even though "Our days /Laugh, lower, and lighten past, and find no station /That stays," "thought and faith are mightier things than time /Can wrong, /Made splendid once with speech, or made sublime /By song.". *Poems*, III, 246-247.

[47] Here again the sun is both one of the enduring powers of nature and a symbol of the creative powers of man.

[48] *Poems*, V, 53.

[49] Everett G. Powell, "The Manuscript of Swinburne's 'Off Shore,'" *Library Chronicle of the University of Texas*, 8, ii(1966), 20-21. Fannie E. Ratchford also comments on the manuscript of the poem in "Swinburne at Work," *Sewanee Review*, 31 (1923), 358-361, but she does not offer an interpretation of the poem.

[50] The introductory poem and dedication "To Walter Theodore Watts," *Poems*, V, [84]. All subsequent references to "By the North Sea" will be included in the text itself.

[51] "There is no God, O son, /If thou be none" (*Poems*, II, 194).

[52] Section IV, for example, begins, "But aloft and afront of me" (*Poems*, V, 97), and Section VII, "But afar on the headland exalted" (Ibid., 108).

[53] See McGann, *Swinburne*, 142.

[54] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xxii; see also Letters, IV, 176.

[55] Actually, two smaller movements of the spirit have been made into one here: after his contemplation of the possibility of the rest which accompanies death, the speaker moves back, at the beginning of section II, to observe the desolate scene immediately before him. This continues on in section III, until, prompted by the death-like scene before him and of his earlier comparison of the Christian conception of death and the more natural and pagan idea of it, he recalls Odysseus' journey to the underworld.

[56] The darkness may be seen to be greater than that of Greece because of the intervening centuries of the Christian night (as his use of the word "Hades" would suggest) or because of modern man's greater knowledge of the darkness of nature. Both ideas are indirectly presented later on in the poem (section VI).

[57] See, in this context, "A Midsummer Holiday," in which the speaker pursues the "goal that is not and ever again the goal" (Poems, VI, 6); "A Nympholept," in which the speaker attains a state in which "the goal of delight and life is one" (Poems, VI, 139); and "Thalassius," in which the poet-hero "turned again from all hearts else on quest" (Poems, III, 308). Swinburne's comments on Ulysses in his review of Morris' Life and Death of Jason (Complete Works, XV, 57) are also relevant here.

[58] In the last stanza in the section, the speaker suggests he is "the wind's and the sun's and the water's" (Poems, V, 101) and the introductory poem suggests that these forces "create /That joy wherewith man's life grown passionate /Gains heart to hear and sense to read and faith /To know the secret word" of the mother (Ibid., [84]). It should also be remembered that in his criticism of Shelley, Swinburne uses "delight" to describe that state which unites the "regions" of "sensation" and "contemplation."

[59] Powell suggests in "The Manuscript of Swinburne's 'Off Shore,'" 21, that the influence of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" may be seen in "Off Shore." And it may also be suggested that Shelley's poem also influenced "By the North Sea." Swinburne's comments on Shelley's poem should be quoted here:

> The personal cry of suffering and exultation and hope, of rapture and regret and faith, which thrills the matchless music of the verse as with the very throb of living blood, serves only to quicken and to deepen the effect of the sensuous and supersensual emotion impressed by the glory of nature when most joyous, and expressed in the splendour of song when most sublime.
> (Complete Works, XV, 339)

This is one of Shelley's poems which is linked with Swinburne's own sense of existence.

[60] McGann, Swinburne, 143, makes the same suggestion.

[61] The second stanza presents both the negative and the positive

aspects of nature, the negative here clearly associated with "inshore" and the speaker's "near" vision.

[62] See again in this context the cosmological myth in the "Hymn of Man."

[63] Swinburne again returns to many of the images and ideas of the first part of the poem. He imagines the time when "[c]hurch and hospice," "[h]all and chancel" rang with "choral chime" and "spirit of prayer" to hail a "God more merciful than Time" (stanza 8, section VI, 106). Here Time is the less gentle and more powerful god; and, like the crumbling towers and the worshippers, the Christian God is dead, and another song, that of the wind (stanza 11), is heard. The acceptance of the destructiveness of Time is an indication of the speaker's advance.

[64] See Poems, II, 147, quoted in Chapter II.

[65] Poems, III, 326. As McGann suggests in his analysis of "By the North Sea," Swinburne, 145, "having forced the ego to stand to its fate, you may begin to live the freedom of the self. Life is not to be triumphed over . . . . Rather, it is to be lived, fully and without any attempts to modify its essential wholeness, with which the self must ultimately identify."

[66] Poems, III, 328 and 329.

[67] It is interesting to note, as well, that Swinburne's suggestion that the island may be that to which Boreas, the North Wind, brought Oreithyia (a myth also included in Erechtheus) indirectly links it with the Hyperboreans and with Apollo.

[68] Poems, III, 332. This poem is a good example of how the natural, political, and aesthetic aspects of Swinburne's thought are all of a piece.

[69] Ibid., 334 and 338.

[70] Ibid., 331.

[71] Ibid., 334.

[72] Ibid., 334-335.

[73] Ibid., 337. In a brief concluding section, it should be added, the poet asks the Great Goddess, the sea, to take his "song of this thy flower [the island and his own spirit] to keep /Who hast my heart in hold" (Ibid., 338).

[74] Complete Works, XIII, 207. It should be remembered, however, that, as in "Thalassius," the poet must himself win through to the Apollonian state; in "The Garden of Cymodoce," of course, the poet has already won through to the state symbolized by the island.

[75] Letters, III, 160.

[76] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xx-xxi. Some critics, and poets, have, however, found such poems as "The Garden of Cymodoce" rather incongruous mixtures. Housman, for example, commenting directly on this passage in the "Dedicatory Epistle," denounces Swinburne for perpetually "talking shop": "He cannot watch a sunset at sea without beginning to think of Beaumont and Fletcher." "Swinburne," Cornhill Magazine, 177 (Autumn, 1969), 386.

[77] Compare "By the North Sea," stanzas 11-13, section VI, Poems, V, 106-107.

[78] Poems, V, 65. Swinburne, of course, recalls lines 88-89 of Act III, scene iii of The Winter's Tale: "I have seen how it [the sea] chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the shore."

[79] Swinburne, it may be added, could have had The Winter's Tale in mind when he presented his Thalassius, the "sea-flower" left on the shore.

[80] Swinburne's comments on Iago, and on Goneril and Regan, are important here. In his critical works on Shakespeare, Swinburne links Goneril and Regan with the amorality of the animal instincts and Iago with the indifferent amorality of the intellect. See Complete Works, XI, 245 and 127-129.

[81] Complete Works, XI, 122. He continues: "We look upward and downward, and in vain, into the deepest things of nature; . . . to the roots of life, and to the stars; from the roots that no God waters to the stars which give no man light; over a world full of death and life without resting-place or guidance," Ibid., 122-123. For his specific comments on the storm scene, see Ibid., 237.

[82] Poems, VI, 155.

[83] See, for example, Complete Works, XI, 123:

> To Prometheus the fetters of the lord and enemy of mankind were bitter; upon Orestes the hand of heaven was laid too heavily to bear; yet in the not utterly infinite and everlasting distance we see beyond them the promise of the morning on which mystery and justice shall be made one . . . . But on the horizon of Shakespeare's tragic fatalism we see no such twilight of atonement, such pledge of reconciliation as this. . . . [F]ar less is there any light of heavenly harmony or of heavenly wisdom of Apollo or Athene from above.

See also XI, 292-293, quoted in Chapter VI.

[84] Ibid., 248-249. Here Swinburne concludes that Aeschylus excells Shakespeare "in height of prophetic power, in depth of reconciling inspiration" (248): "As a poet and a thinker Aeschylus was the equal, if not the superior, of Shakespeare; as a creator, a revealer, and an interpreter [of character] . . . no man ever lived who can stand beside [Shakespeare]" (254).

[85] Poems, VI, 156.

[86] See also Complete Works, XI, 57, where the same metaphor is used to compare Shakespeare to Marlowe.

[87] Stanzas II and V, Poems, III, 11 and 12. The conjunction of sunset and dawn in "Hesperia" should be recalled here.

[88] Stanza XXIX, Poems, III, 18.

[89] Stanza VII, Ibid., 12.

[90] Stanzas XXXVII and XL, Ibid., 20 and 21.

[91] See, for example, "A Swimmer's Dream."

[92] In "Evening on the Broads," it may be added, the visionary moment is presented in the same imagery of the sunset which seems endless (V, 59). Twice Swinburne repeats this idea: "Still is the sunset adrift," and "Still is the sunset afloat" (V, 60 and 61); yet it does give way to the stormy night.

[93] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xix-xx.

[94] The same metaphor of "On the Bay" is employed in this group of "Prologues," which concludes with "The Afterglow of Shakespeare," Poems, VI, 423-425.

[95] An incomplete list would include such diverse figures as: Landor, Hugo, Mazzini, Armand Barbès, Whitman, Shelley, Gautier, Baudelaire, Barry Cornwall, Louis Kossuth, Wagner, Sir Henry Taylor, John William Inchbold, Richard F. Burton, Dr. John Brown, Pauline Trevelyan, William Bell Scott, Browning, John Nichol, Edward John Trelawny, and Aurelio Saffi.

[96] Poems, VI, 318. Here Aeschylus is again compared to Shakespeare.

[97] See Poems, V, 206. Both poems celebrate such moments of "prophetic art" as Aeschylus' presentation of the defiant endurance of Prometheus against the false God, and, again, the reconciliation of the darkness of nature and the light of man's wisdom in the figure of Apollo, the true God.

[98] See Poems, VI, 230-237.

[99] Marston was one of the group of young poets (which also included Arthur O'Shaugnessy) who became acquainted with Swinburne in the 70's and attended his readings. Swinburne's regard for Marston is a combination of sincere sympathy for the "adversity" of his life and an admiration of his poetry and his dedication to art. Marston was blind from birth, and also suffered the pain of his fiancee's death immediately before they were to be married. For Swinburne's comments on Marston's poetry and his life see, in particular, Letters, II, 152,

295; IV, 167; and V, 49 and 181-182.

[100] It should be noted here that the temptation to hope for some sort of individual survival after life is strong when Swinburne is as emotionally involved as here, but it is resisted. See Lang, "Introduction," Letters, I, xxv-xxvi.

[101] Stanza XVII, Poems, III, 57. See also stanzas I, III, VIII. The image of flowers is the unifying image in the poem. Swinburne's "northern" flowers, mentioned in the first and last stanzas of the poem, are "chill" and "wintry" (Ibid., 57) not only because these verses are elegiac but also because Swinburne recognizes some of the same harsh truths as does Baudelaire, only from a different perspective.

[102] Stanza IV, Ibid., 51.

[103] In his thorough article on the poem, "'Ave atque Vale': An Introduction to Swinburne," first printed in Victorian Poetry and reprinted in his Swinburne, McGann suggests that Baudelaire's "muse is Proserpine (or the Tannhäuser Venus, who is the same figure seen in another age)" and that Swinburne "deliberately conflates the characters of the Horselberg Venus and Proserpine" (Swinburne, 302). But he does not link the attitude of the speakers of these poems with Baudelaire's own. It is also interesting to note that McGann links this poem with "Hertha" (Ibid., 298).

[104] Stanza XIV, Poems, III, 55-56. The suggestion here is that Apollo takes on Hebraic qualities which are "strange" to him when he mourns Baudelaire.

[105] As Swinburne himself said, after explaining to John Morley the essential idea of the poem, "This sounds rather metaphysical, but I don't think the verse is obscure or turbid -- the form of a hymn or a choral chant, and the alternate metre of twelve long trochaic lines and twelve shorter anapestic, carry the thought on and carry off the symbolic or allegoric ambiguity; at least so I flatter myself." Letters, III, 130.

[106] Complete Works, XIII, 238.

[107] A Study of Ben Jonson, Complete Works, XII, 3.

[108] Ibid., 4 and 5. See also 7, 9, 15, and 48-49 for similar definitions of the "instinct" which Jonson lacked.

[109] Swinburne, for example, suggests that in his dramas Jonson lacks essential "sympathy" (Ibid., 21).

[110] Complete Works, XII, 242-243.

[111] "A Note on Charlotte Brontë," Complete Works, XIV, 10. Swinburne's previous remarks make it quite clear that Emily should be included in the comparison. By praising Charlotte Brontë, Swinburne

is again attempting to redress a critical imbalance, and is aware that his opinion of Charlotte is "unfashionable" (Ibid., 4).

[112] Complete Works, V, 120. The first time Swinburne uses the terms, however, he uses them in quite a different sense, one which is related to his distinction between types of "gods":

> In all times there have been gods that alighted and giants that appeared on earth; . . . Titans and Olympians. Sometimes a supreme poet is both at once: such above all men is Aeschylus, so also Dante, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Hugo, are all gods and giants; they have the lightning as well as the light of the world, and in hell they have command as in heaven; they can see in the night as by day." (Complete Works, XV, 140-141)

Here the term "giant" or "Titan" is applied to those poets who capture the "power" and the "mystery" and the darkness of the world (see "Notes on Designs of Old Masters at Florence," Complete Works, XV, 158, where many of the same artists are mentioned) and which Swinburne often symbolizes by the sea. Swinburne uses "Titanic" in this sense when he suggests that King Lear is the "most oceanic and Titanic" of his works (Complete Works, XI, 122, quoted above) and when he describes Brontë's Wuthering Heights (see below).

[113] The difference may be suggested by the terms "tragic passion" and "tragic joy."

[114] It must be mentioned here that Swinburne also uses the term "prophet" for any visionary poetry, whether the vision be in accordance with his own or be essentially Christian. This is another troublesome area in Swinburne's criticism; he does accord Milton and Dante the status of true poets, but his tendency when dealing with the prophetic side of their art is to suggest that they achieve greatness when they depict the sorrow and suffering of life and not when they delve into its source; see the above discussion of Swinburne's treatment of Dante in the "Prelude" to "Tristram of Lyonesse," and Complete Works, XV, 351-352.

[115] Complete Works, XI, 295; also quoted in Chapter IV.

[116] "Emily Brontë," Complete Works, XIV, 46. Wuthering Heights is compared here to both King Lear and Aeschylus' Eumenides (Ibid., 49).

[117] "Charlotte Brontë," Ibid., 32. Here Swinburne is, of course, speaking of Charlotte's Shirley.

[118] Ibid., 32 and 35.

[119] "Emily Brontë," Ibid., 50. Here we have, again, another definition of the concept of a Titan: not a flawed artist, nor only an artist who recognizes the dark mystery of life, but one who has won through to the concept of divine freedom. The imagery here is related to the Promethean imagery of Songs before Sunrise.

[120] Complete Works, XI, 119. Swinburne also suggests that Marlowe

was "the first free thinker of us all, and perhaps even braver than Shelley, who after all did not run any risk of being roasted alive Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam." Letters, VI, 216.

[121] Complete Works, XI, 120 and 119.

[122] Ibid., 125-126.

[123] Ibid., 238 and 239.

[124] Complete Works, XV, 128.

[125] Swinburne also adds in Under the Microscope (Complete Works, XVI, 400) that

> It is not mere fluid melody of dulcet and facile verse that is wanting in him; . . . it is the inner sense of harmony which cannot but speak in music, the innate and spiritual instinct of sweetness and fitness and exaltation which cannot but express itself in height and perfection of song. This divine concord is never infringed or violated by the stormiest symphonies of passion or imagination by anyone of the supreme and sovereign poets: by Aeschylus or Shakespeare . . . .

[126] Complete Works, XV, 317.

[127] It is interesting to note that Swinburne also detected in Blake a kind of "Titanic stammer" (Complete Works, XVI, 85).

[128] Letters, II, 101.

[129] In Rossetti's Poems of 1881, the title was changed to "Beauty."

[130] Complete Works, XV, 33. Here, as he indicates, Swinburne is deliberately altering the story of Paris and Venus and presenting the prize of beauty to Sappho.

[131] "Sappho," Saturday Review, 67 (Feb. 21, 1914), 228. Swinburne expresses the same judgment, in exactly the same language, in a letter to Henry Arthur Bright (1880), Letters, IV, 123-124.

[132] Complete Works, XIII, 243-244, and 243.

[133] Swinburne uses this phrase, as we have seen in Chapter IV, to describe Keats' art (Complete Works, XV, 380); however, it may also be applied to Sappho's art.

[134] Complete Works, XV, 316; XVI, 359; XIV, 321-322; and XVI, 359. Bowra also points to the same purity and passion, air and fire in Sappho's verses:

> The special claim of Sappho's poetry is the perfection with which powerful emotions are shaped into a highly disciplined art without losing any of their force . . . . The paradox of Sappho's art is that, though she was certainly moved deeply by physical

passions, their physical aspect vanished in her treatment of them . . . . What counts is their pure flame, their immediate intensity, which enhances the consciousness by making her see things . . . with a peculiar clairvoyance . . . . C.M. Bowra, Landmarks of Greek Literature (Cleveland and New York, 1966), 92-93.

[135] "Dedicatory Epistle," Poems, I, xxi, quoted above; Complete Works, XIV, 237.

[136] Letters, IV, 78.

[137] Fragment 138, Lyra Graeca, ed. and trans. J.M. Edmonds, I (London, 1922), 277.

[138] This passage is quoted by McGann, Swinburne, 110; see also Pope's rendition of "Sappho to Phaon," included in Henry Thornton Wharton's Sappho (London, 1898), 194.

[139] The Scholiast on Lucian's Portraits and Hermesianax quoted by Athenaeus, both included in Lyra Graeca, ed. and trans. Edmonds, I, 161 and 145.

[140] See "On the Cliffs," Poems, III, 315-316, where Swinburne gives his own translation of the passage, and 322, where he says man has heard her cry in the nightingale -- "even Aeschylus as I."

[141] See Lafourcade, Swinburne's Hyperion, 149 and 150. This song is, as Lafourcade suggests, the result of the experience Swinburne later refers to in his letter.

[142] Sappho's song

whirl'd, shook, rang out, spoke,
Stunned the charmed night with long melodies
Then in a thousand gurgling eddies flew
   Of whirlwind sweetness, lost in its own sound,
As eddying winds of autumn when they blew,
   Caught the sere leaves and hurried round and round,
So her rich notes tumultuous panted she[.]

Lafourcade, Swinburne's Hyperion, 149-150.

Swinburne seems to associate Shelley's desire to be one with the spirit of nature, the voice of the wind, with Sappho's song:

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness.

"Ode to the West Wind," ll. 57-61,
Shelley: Poetical Works, ed. Hutchinson, 579.

[143] The idea of dying for love is, of course, often associated with the nightingale: and Shelley more directly associates this

tradition with the bird:

The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon the heart,
As I must die on thine,
Beloved as thou art.

O lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
"The Indian Serenade," ll. 13-18, Ibid., 580.

And:

When one ["voluptuous nightingale"] with bliss or
sadness fails,

And through the windless ivy boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom.
Prometheus Unbound, II, ii, 26-29, Ibid., 232.

Swinburne may have associated these lines and therefore the nightingale with Shelley's description of his present despairing state in "Ode to the West Wind": "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" (l. 54, Ibid., 579). It is interesting to note that Lafourcade also quotes the above lines from "The Indian Serenade," suggesting that they influenced a love song of 1859 or 1860 entitled "Song." The desire for death is here associated by Swinburne with the nightingale (*Swinburne's Hyperion*, 153-156).

[144] In his *Geography*, Strabo refers to both traditions; see the passage included in Edmonds' *Lyra Graeca*, I, 151. The second tradition, of course, enhances Swinburne's suggestion that Sappho was transformed into a nightingale after her death.

[145] In "The Nightingale" itself, it may be added, Swinburne does not resolve these two suggestions; he merely indicates that all that matters is the note of intermingled "joy" and "sorrow" in her poetry. This suggestion is quite in keeping with Swinburne's tendency to point to the moments in the poetry of others which approximate his own sense of life and to ignore, for the moment, any differences in cause or idea. See, for example, the discussion of Baudelaire above (and below). It should also be added that in Swinburne's own description of her leap he intermingles both traditions:

Never but once did mortal fire of passion
Such a fierce sweetness thrill, when she who died
Whirl'd by a storm of love and indignation
From dusk Leucadia's rock, her poet pride
Mastering wild love, rung out her burning song,
To Lemnos' shades and seas, her laurell'd troop among.

This passage (*Swinburne's Hyperion*, 150) clearly anticipates Swinburne's treatment of Sappho in "Anactoria."

[146] McGann, *Swinburne*, 111.

[147] *Poems*, I, 54 and 55.

[148] Stanza XII, *Poems*, III, 55.

[149] Stanza II, Ibid., 50-51. Baudelaire's artistic technique is also similar to Sappho's in some respects. As Swinburne says in his review of Les Fleurs du Mal, Baudelaire's art is marked by a perfect "simplicity" and a "quality of drawing" much like that of Keats. Complete Works, XIII, 419, 422, and 421.

[150] Complete Works, XV, 451 and 456. Indeed, in "Lesbos," Baudelaire, who suggests that he has known from his birth "Des rires effrénés mêlés au sombre pleur," says to the island,

> Tu tires ton pardon de l'excès des basiers,
> Reine du doux empire, aimable et noble terre,
> Et des raffinements toujours inépuisés.

[151] As he says, it is particularly in Simeon Solomon's "Sappho" and in his "Antinous" that this "unconscious underlying sense asserts itself." Here, in particular, "the author of the Canticles and the author of the Atys have agreed to work together." Yet he also says that the "heart and soul" of these pictures are "right," that Solomon has captured the essence of Sappho. Complete Works, XV, 450 and 451.

[152] Here Swinburne may have incorporated Baudelaire's associations of Sappho with the transcendent impulse:

> Tu tires ton pardon de l'éternal martyr
> Infligé sans relâche aux coeurs ambitieux
> Qu'attire loin de nous le radieux sourire
> Entrevu vaguement au bord des autres cieux[.]

[153] The most difficult poem is "On the Cliffs," which has been considered almost impenetrable by many critics. The opinion of Rutland (who has the advantage of being an excellent classical scholar) may be considered representative: "Now, it is perfectly true that On the Cliffs is almost unreadable, for two reasons which also mar most of Swinburne's later poetry. Its language, while it contains magnificent passages, is so complicated that a mental effort is needed merely to follow its constructions; and its thought is not presented consecutively in a natural inevitable flow, but comes in surges." Swinburne, A Nineteenth-Century Hellene, 321. See also Edward Thomas, Algernon Charles Swinburne, 185-187; Samuel Chew, Swinburne, 156; T. Earle Welby, A Study of Swinburne (London, 1926), 137-138.

[154] A more extensive analysis of these poems than will be presented here is, for example, offered by David A. Cook in "The Content and Meaning of Swinburne's 'Anactoria,'" VP, 9 (1971), 77-93, and by Meredith B. Raymond in "Swinburne among the Nightingales," VP, 6 (1968), 125-141.

[155] Both Lafourcade (La Jeunesse, II, 451) and Rutland (Swinburne, 285) discuss the relationship between the fragments and Swinburne's poem, Lafourcade listing the order in which the fragments are invoked in "Anactoria." In general, it may be said that Swinburne's poem is close in spirit (certainly not in technique) to Sappho and that all of the attitudes he attributes to Sappho may be found in the fragments.

He has, however, perhaps made Sappho's sadism (present in fragments 28 and 44 of Edmonds' ordering) and her denunciation of the high Gods (present, if indirectly, in fragment 91) more central than they actually are in her (extant) works.

[156] In "The First Draft of Swinburne's 'Anactoria,'" MLR, 14 (1919), 277, Edmund Gosse indicates that lines 155-188 of "Anactoria" (Poems, I, 62-63) were not part of the first draft of the poem. He considers them an "after-thought," but they are actually of central importance to the poem. All subsequent references to "Anactoria" here will be included in the text itself.

[157] See McGann, Swinburne, 111, who particularly compares lines 1115-1129 of Atalanta (Poems, IV, 286-287) to lines 175-184 of "Anactoria," which begin, "who hath cursed /Spirit and flesh with longing?" These lines will be quoted below.

[158] See Poems, I, 61-62. She wishes to make Anactoria "a lyre of many faultless agonies," just as she herself is God's lyre.

[159] David A. Cook also suggests that Sappho attempts to achieve absolute union with the beloved. See "The Content and Meaning of Swinburne's 'Anactoria,'" particularly 78 and 81.

[160] Indeed, in his comments on the poem, Swinburne suggests that Sappho's reactions "are to be taken as the first outcome or outburst of foiled and fruitless passion recoiling upon itself." Notes on Poems and Reviews, Complete Works, XVI, 359.

[161] See Poems, I, 166.

[162] As Rutland suggests (Swinburne, 140-141), the passage which Swinburne translated from de Sade in his essay on Blake (quoted here in Chapter II) may be compared to Sappho's denunciation of the cruel God.

[163] Julian Baird, "Swinburne, Sade, and Blake: The Pleasure-Pain Paradox," 74.

[164] This phrase is used in both "The Nightingale" (Lafourcade, Swinburne's Hyperion, 150) and Swinburne's notes on "Anactoria" (Complete Works, XVI, 360).

[165] This seems to be not only the final destructive act of but also a kind of gift from this "high God": "Albeit he hide me in the deep dear sea /And cover me with cool wan foam, and ease /This soul of mine" (Poems, I, 65). This conception of a final release is not available to a Christian theist. It is not clear in the poem if Sappho accepts the inevitability of death or still longs for immediate release.

[166] Meredith B. Raymond, "Swinburne among the Nightingales," 130.

[167] Poems, III, 312-313. This part of the poem may be compared to "Music: An Ode," Poems, VI, 334-335. All further references to "On the Cliffs" will be included in the text itself.

[168] Swinburne may be pointing to a specific period in his life, one which may be connected with "A Forsaken Garden" and poems related to it; however, in many subsequent poems, Swinburne returns to this mood, and advances from it.

[169] Compare "Anactoria," Poems, I, 65, and "Thalassius," Poems, III, 310.

[170] See the passage quoted in Chapter VI, Poems, I, 324.

Chapter VIII

[1] Philip Henderson, Swinburne, 281. Henderson does not mention that the drawing also includes, in the foreground, a youth expiring before the Sphinx.

[2] Dedication to "By the North Sea," Poems, V, [84]. The identification with Hertha is enhanced by the fact that in the drawing the Sphinx is intertwined with the Tree of Life and placed on a cliff by the sea.

[3] This is the meaning that the picture had for Rossetti himself: as Frederic Stephens suggests, "Rossetti characteristically wrote of [it] as being meant to be a sort of painted 'Cloud Confines' . . . ." The poem itself declares that "no word comes from the dead; /Whether at all they be, /Or whether as bond or free." These lines and Frederic Stephens' remark are quoted by David Sonstroem in Rossetti and the Fair Lady (Middletown, Connecticut, 1970), 179.

[4] Here I have amalgamated two of the four types of women which Sonstroem outlines at the beginning of his study (4-5). The fallen woman and the victimized woman have much in common, as his study reveals.

[5] Their earthly embodiments may also be mentioned: Atalanta, the beloved of "The Triumph of Time" (who represents the conventions of Christianity) and such women as Iseult of the White Hands and Queen Eleanor (who represent the cruelty of Christianity).

[6] It is difficult to generalize here, as each speaker of each dramatic monologue puts forward an individual attitude to existence, one which is partially a result of the age in which he lives.

[7] Their interrelationship may, again, be illustrated by Chastelard. As we have seen, the play is an exploration of the impulses represented by courtly love. As Mary herself suggests, she

has taken the place of God in Chastelard's mind; but there is also a guilty sensuality about his love which makes her appear as a "Venus" who "reddens at the mouth with blood of men" (Act V, scene ii, *Tragedies*, II, 128). Throughout, Chastelard's desire is for death, and, although he does not see her as the peaceful and pagan Proserpine, she appears in his dreams as the macabre figure of Death with whom he dances (II, i, Ibid., 45).

[8] "Anactoria," *Poems*, I, 62.

[9] "A Nympholept," *Poems*, VI, 140.

[10] Swinburne also presents individual women who break with Christian conventions and move toward these truths: Iseult of Ireland and Rosamond in a personal context, and Denise in a more political one. Chthonia may be included here, as well, although in another sense she is representative of the spirit of Athens.

[11] Although exact influence is difficult to trace -- each incarnation of the "cruel Venus" being quite similar to the previous ones -- in *The Romantic Agony* Mario Praz gives a good account of her literary lineage and of Swinburne's specific influence on subsequent *femmes fatales*. The literary lineage of the Proserpine figure and Swinburne's specific influence on the use of the image in subsequent poetry is yet to be traced in any detail.

[12] Lionel Johnson, "The Dark Angel," *The Complete Poems of Lionel Johnson*, ed. Iain Fletcher (London, 1953), 65.

[13] Arthur Symons, "Satiety," *The Collected Works of Arthur Symons* (London, 1924), I, 88. John A. Lester, Jr. identifies both of these moods with "decadence" in *Journey Through Despair* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1968), as does Jerome Hamilton Buckley in *The Victorian Temper*. As Buckley suggests: "the note of world-fatigue dominated altogether the tenuous music of Decadence" (228); and, the "literature of Decadence was . . . animated by a conscious will to explore the dark underside of experience, with which the Decadent himself associated immorality and evil" (230-231).

[14] Quoted by Norman Friedman, "From Victorian to Modern," *VNL*, 32 (Fall, 1967), 26.

[15] See, for example, *Beyond the Tragic Vision* (New York, 1962).

[16] Rossetti, of course, translated the *stil novisti* poets. It has often been suggested that Rossetti's impulse was, like Dante's, fundamentally a transcendent one and that he was ultimately unable to believe in this transcendent ideal.

[17] See Swinburne's comments on Rossetti, *Complete Works*, XV, 3 and following; and Sonstroem's *Rossetti and the Fair Lady*.

[18] Harold L. Weatherby, "Problems of Form and Content in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," *VP*, 2 (1964), 13 and 15.

[19] Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (1910; repr. New York, 1967), 235. Stephen J. Spector makes essentially the same point in "Love, Unity, and Desire in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," ELH, 38 (1971), 432-458.

[20] "Introductory Sonnet" to The House of Life, Rossetti's Poems, ed. Doughty, 212.

[21] Peckham, for instance, and -- as suggested when analyzing "Thalassius" -- Donald C. Stuart.

[22] Lester, Journey Through Despair, 75, 74 and (quoting Yeats and Pater), 122.

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